



## CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

69-825 Highway 111  
Rancho Mirage, California 92270  
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### ENVIRONMENTAL INITIAL STUDY

**Project Title:** Rancho Mirage Auto Plaza

**City Project No.:** **Environmental Assessment Case No. EA20-0007 & EA21-0001**, Preliminary Development Plan Case No. PDP20-0007; Tentative Parcel Map Case No. TPM21-0001 (TPM38003), Tentative Tract Map Case No. TTM20-0001 (TTM38054) and Development Agreement Case No. DA21-0001.

**Lead Agency Name and Address:** City of Rancho Mirage  
69-825 Highway 111  
Rancho Mirage, California 92270  
Phone: (760) 328-2266 Fax: (760) 324-9851

**Project Sponsor's Name and Address:** Innovative Automotive Holdings  
67615 E. Palm Canyon Drive  
Cathedral City, California 92234

**Contact Person And Phone Number:** Ben Torres, Associate Planner  
Phone: (760) 328-2266, Extension 253

**Project Location:** South side of the intersection of Highway 111 and Library Way, immediately west of and adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel. The project area is in Section 12, T5S, R5E, SBB&M (see USGS Rancho Mirage 7.5-minute quadrangle map).  
APN No.: 684-190-007

**Project Area:** ±25.55 acres

**General Plan Designation:** Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) and Hillside Reserve (H-R)

**Zoning Designation:** Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) and Hillside Reserve (H-R), also located in the Highway 111 East Specific Plan District No. 10



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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project proposes development of a  $\pm 25.55$ -acre parcel immediately south of Highway 111 and west of and immediately adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel. The Project location is shown on Exhibits 1 and 2. A total of  $\pm 15.94$  acres of the subject property would be developed with multiple auto dealerships, shared auto service centers, and parking lots. The balance of the site ( $\pm 9.61$  acres), largely consisting of foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains, would remain undeveloped and preserved as Hillside Reserve (H-R).

The Project would be developed in two (2) phases, as described in Table 1. Phase 1 would result in development of Parcel 1 ( $\pm 6.5$  acres) on the western portion of the subject property. Development would include a Volvo dealership, Infiniti dealership, auto Service Center, parking lots, and a future dealership and service center. The proposed Phase 1 site plan and elevations are shown on Exhibits 3 through 7. Phase 2 would result in development of Parcel 2 ( $\pm 9.44$  acres) on the eastern portion of the subject property. Projected square footages for Phase 2 buildings are shown in Table 1; however, a Phase 2 site plan and elevations have not been submitted to the City and will be provided at such time that development is proposed. Table 1 summarizes proposed land uses and square footages.

**Table 1**  
**Proposed Land Uses**

<b>Proposed Land Use</b>	<b>Proposed Square Feet</b>
<b>Phase 1: development of Parcel 1 (<math>\pm 6.5</math> acres)</b>	
Volvo Dealership	8,648
Infiniti Dealership	5,822
Service Center with 13 service bays	15,344
Future Dealership	5,000
Future Service Center with 6 service bays	6,000
Subtotal:	40,814
<b>Phase 2: development of Parcel 2 (<math>\pm 9.44</math> acres)</b>	
Future Service Center with 37 service bays	50,000
Future Dealership 1	20,000
Future Dealership 2	20,000
Subtotal:	90,000
<b>Remainder (<math>\pm 9.61</math> acres):</b>	
Vacant (Hillside Reserve)	---
<b>Total:</b>	<b>130,814</b>

The Project includes a Preliminary Development Plan for Phase 1 building architecture, site plan and landscaping; a Tentative Parcel Map (TPM38003) to subdivide the east and west portions of the site; and a Tentative Tract Map (TTM38054) which further subdivides the west side/Phase 1 portion of the site into 5 parcels for the currently proposed dealerships, the future dealership and the knoll on the southwestern portion of the site. Future Preliminary Development Plan(s) will be required as the balance of the site develops. A Development Agreement is also part of the project, identifying the responsibilities of the applicant and the City in the development of the site.

Primary access is proposed via a new central driveway that would extend from the existing signalized intersection at Highway 111 and Library Way (at the Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory), south onto the subject property. The driveway would be developed during Phase 1, and the intersection would provide a full range of vehicle turning movements to/from Highway 111. Secondary access is proposed at: 1) a new driveway at Highway 111 in the northwest corner of the site, developed during Phase 1, and 2) a new driveway at Highway 111 in the northeast corner of the site, developed during Phase 2. The west and east driveways would allow only right in/right out turning maneuvers.



## **Current Conditions**

The site is currently vacant except for an unpaved, unimproved parking lot in the northwest corner that is used for spillover parking from an off-site auto dealership associated with Parcel 2. Portions of the site were mass graded in conjunction with a previous development proposal and have been disturbed by off-road vehicle use. The remainder of the site is sparsely vegetated. The northern portion of the site is relatively flat with elevations approximately 230 feet above mean sea level near Highway 111. The southern and southwestern portions of the site are characterized by hillsides, steep slopes, and rocky outcrops with elevations reaching about 410 feet.

Most of the subject property is designated Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) on the City General Plan and zoning map; the steep slopes in the southern portion are designated Hillside Reserve (H-R). The property is also within the District 10 of the Highway 111 East Specific Plan.

## **Project Location and Limits**

The subject property is bounded by Highway 111 on the north, the West Magnesia Storm Channel on the east, a Peninsular bighorn sheep fence and Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) conservation lands on the south, and a veterinarian office and vacant land on the west.

The subject property is located on the south side of Highway 111, west of and immediately adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel. It is in Section 12, T5S, R5E, SBB&M (see USGS Rancho Mirage 7.5-minute quadrangle map).

## **Surrounding Land Uses**

- West: Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) (veterinarian office), Hillside Reserve (H-R)
- North: Highway 111, Institutional (Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory)
- South: Hillside Reserve (H-R), Peninsular bighorn sheep fence, conservation area of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
- East: Open Space (West Magnesia Storm Channel); east of the channel are Mirage Road, Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) in the Highway 111 East Specific Plan District 5, and Medium Density Residential (R-M)



## Rancho Mirage Auto Plaza Regional Location Map Rancho Mirage, California

## Exhibit

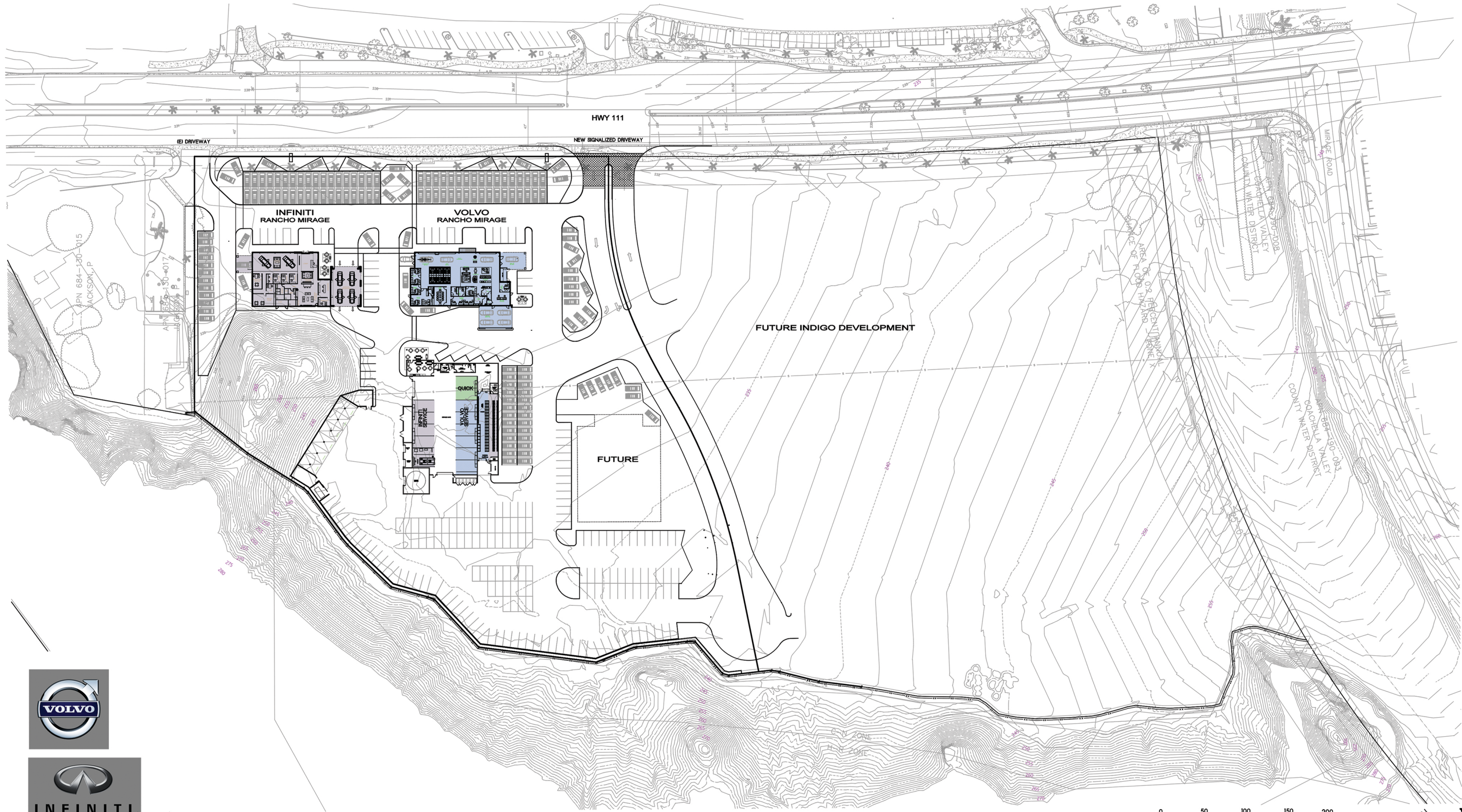
1





Source: Google Earth, 2018





Source: Sanborn A&E, 2020

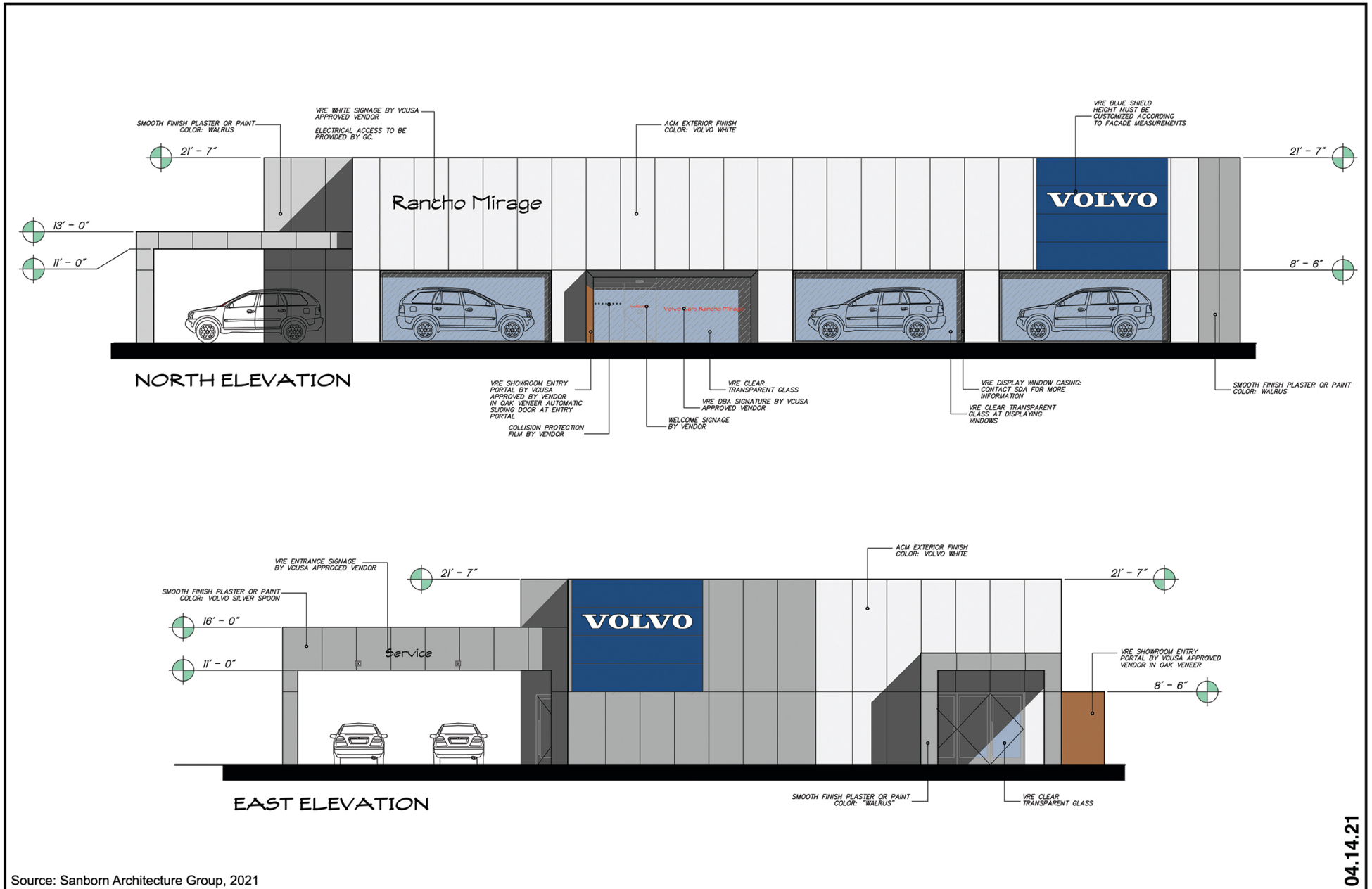


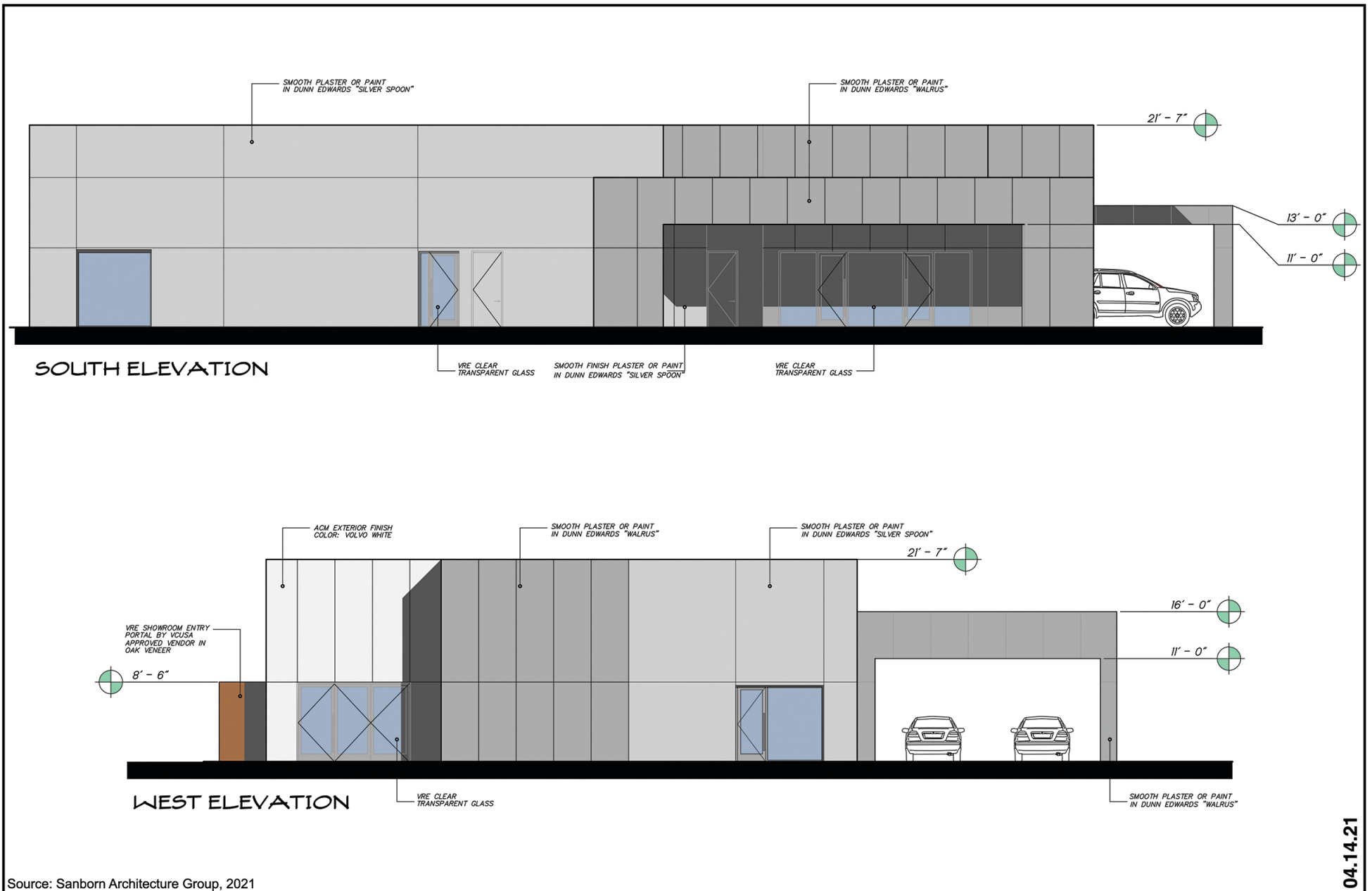
**Rancho Mirage Auto Plaza  
Phase 1: Proposed Site Plan  
Rancho Mirage, California**

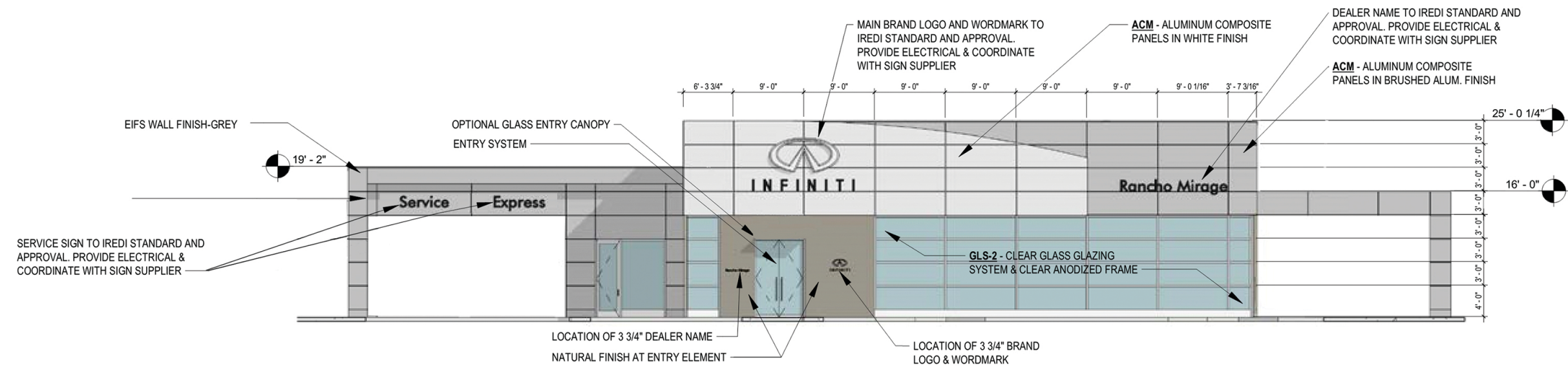
Exhibit

01.04.21

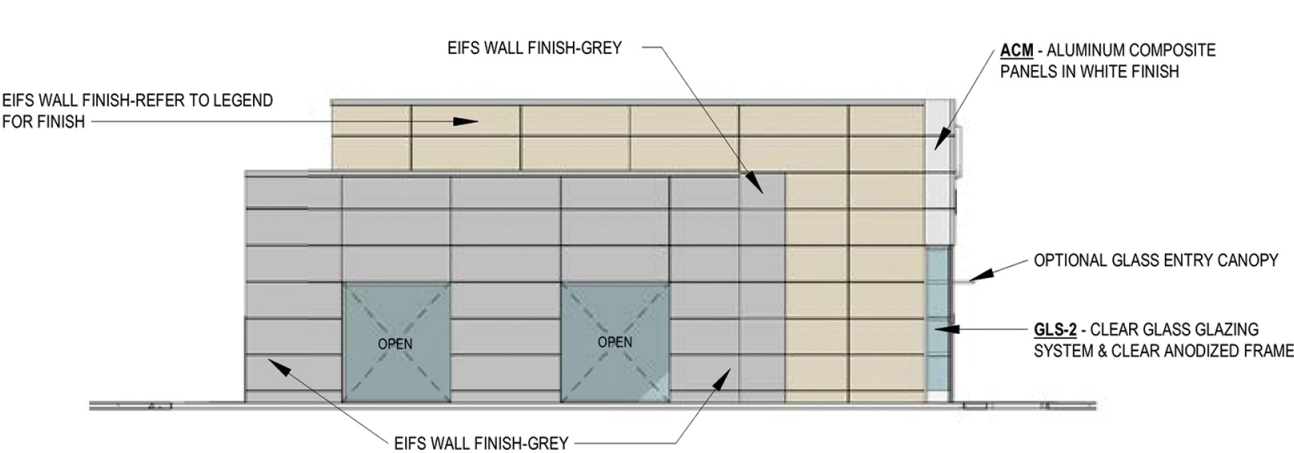




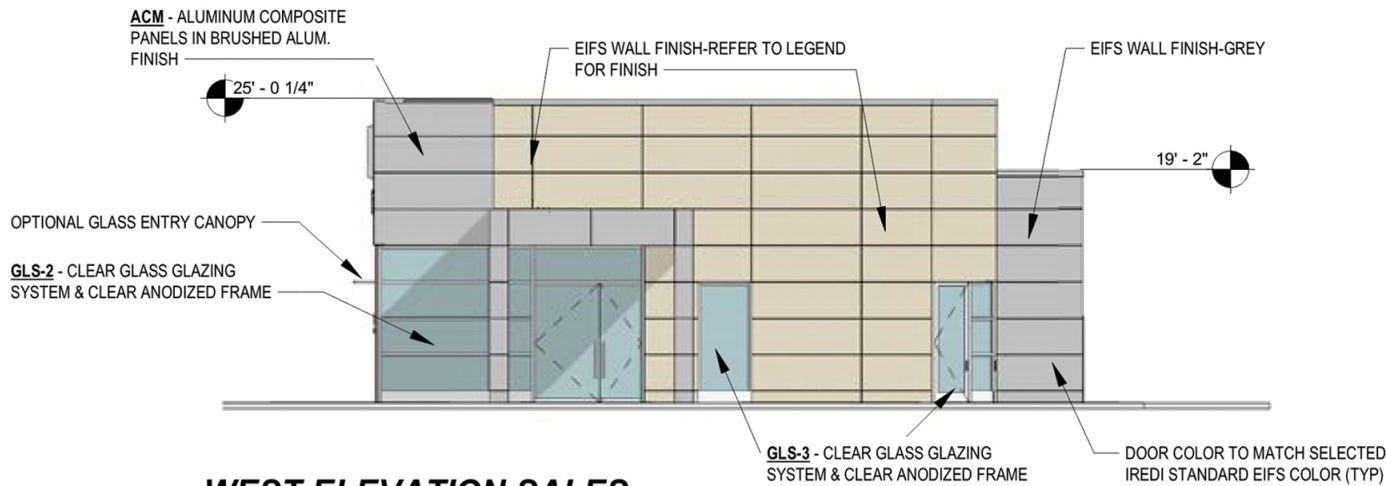




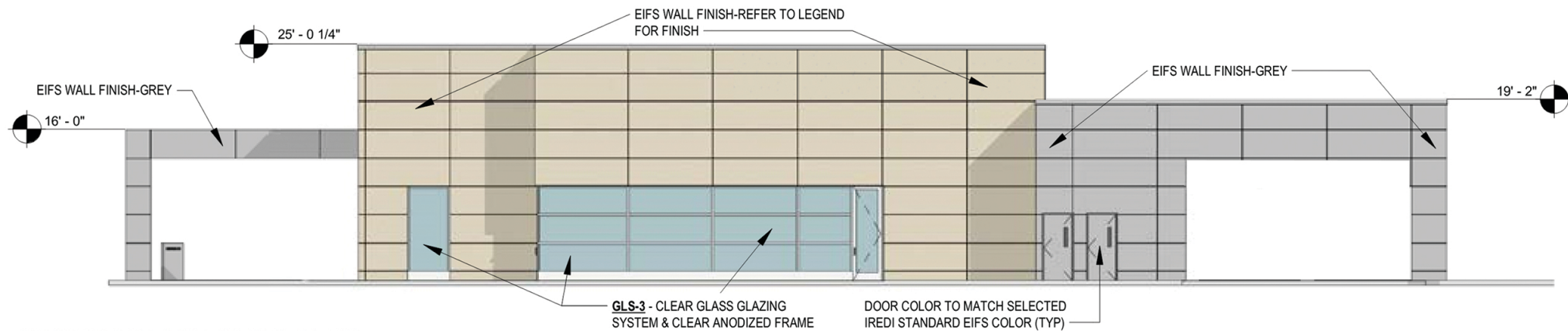
**NORTH ELEVATION - SALES**



**EAST ELEVATION SALES**



**WEST ELEVATION SALES**



**SOUTH ELEVATION SALES**

- EXTERIOR FINISH NOTES**
1. MAINTAIN A 3' TO 9' SCORING PATTERN ON ALL FACES WHEREVER POSSIBLE. MINIMALLY WHERE NEW EIFS IS BEING INSTALLED.
  2. ONLY LIGHT GRAY MECHOSHADOWS MAY BE USED ON SECONDARY WINDOWS REQUIRING SUNSHADING DEVICES.
  3. FINAL SIGNAGE TO BE DETERMINED BY IREDI SIGN COMPANY.
  4. PROVIDE EIFS IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING COLORS FROM ONE OF THREE MANUFACTURERS:  
 \* Manufacturer: STO; Color: 20413; Texture: FINE SAND  
 \* Manufacturer: DRYVIT; Color: BRITE WHITE; Texture: SANDBLAST  
 \* Manufacturer: PAREX Color: 10444L IVORY; Texture: SAND FINE

Source: Sanborn Architecture Group, 2021







## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.


<input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture and Forestry Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology /Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazards & Hazardous Materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology / Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Use / Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Population / Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tribal Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	Utilities / Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildfires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory Findings of Significance



**DETERMINATION:** (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

 Signature: Ben Torres, Associate Planner City of Rancho Mirage	4-14-2021 Date:
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### Environmental Checklist and Discussion:

The following checklist evaluates the proposed project's potential adverse impacts. For those environmental topics for which a potential adverse impact may exist, a discussion of the existing site environment related to the topic is presented followed by an analysis of the project's potential adverse impacts. When the project does not have any potential for adverse impacts for an environmental topic, the reasons why there are no potential adverse impacts are described.

1. AESTHETICS – Except as provided in Public Resource Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; Rancho Mirage Zoning Ordinance, as amended; Highway 111 East Specific Plan 2014; Officially Designated State Scenic Highways Map, Caltrans.

### Background:

The Coachella Valley and the Project area are distinguished by the low-lying desert valley floor surrounded by the high terrain of the San Jacinto, San Bernardino, Little San Bernardino, and Santa Rosa Mountains. These contrasting viewsheds result in open space and mountain scenery that is a major component of the aesthetic quality of the area. Views of the Santa Rosa Mountains contrasting with the desert floor dominate the Project area and are highly valued by the community.

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is immediately adjacent to the foothills and slopes of the Santa Rosa Mountains, and the southern and southwestern portions of the site contain hillsides, steep slopes, and rocky outcrops. The site is fully visible from Highway 111 and the Library and Observatory, and to a lesser extent (due to the intervening storm channel and elevation differences) from commercial and residential development along Mirage Road east of the West Magnesia Storm Channel. The northwestern portion of the site is visible from the adjacent veterinarian office.

The Project will result in development of new buildings, paved surfaces, lighting, landscaping, and other elements of the built environment that will be seen from Highway 111 and properties in the vicinity. However, the Project will be subject to the policies of the General Plan Community Design and Conservation and Open Space Elements, which promote aesthetics and the preservation of scenic vistas. Project design will also be controlled by the Highway 111 East Specific Plan, which promotes high-quality design along the corridor. No development is proposed above the toe-of-slope, and views of the mid- and upper elevation slopes will remain unobstructed. According to the Highway 111 East Specific Plan, buildings are limited to two stories and 35 ft. in height. Proposed Phase 1 buildings are within these



parameters; they are single-story with the following maximum heights: Volvo building 21 ft. 7 in.; Infiniti building 25 ft. ¼ in.; Service Center 22 ft. 2 in. Onsite driveways and parking lots are at grade. Auto bays at the Service Center are within an enclosed building with small-scale windows and two garage doors that shield indoor equipment from view. Garage doors open toward hillsides on the southern and western sides of the property, so when the doors are open, the building interior is not visible from adjacent properties. The designated car wash area is adjacent to the hillside in the southwest portion of the site and shielded from view by hillside terrain. Proposed architectural colors and materials complement the natural landscape. The Volvo showroom proposes a white finish on its northern elevation facing Highway 111 (see Exhibit 3) which is consistent with other materials throughout the City. Lighting will be shielded and consistent with Municipal Code requirements, and landscaping will include native species. Impacts will be less than significant.

Phase 2 proposes the same land uses as Phase 1. Phase 2 design aesthetics are expected to be similar to those of Phase 1 and compliant with the design and aesthetic parameters of the General Plan and Highway 111 East Specific Plan. Impacts to scenic vistas will be less than significant. If Phase 2 deviates from these requirements, the City will determine whether additional review under CEQA is necessary.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Highway 111 in the Project area is designated a state scenic highway in the California State Scenic Highway Program and a View Corridor in the General Plan (General Plan Exhibit 32). However, the subject property does not contain historic buildings or notable trees or other scenic features. No blasting of hillsides or slopes will occur, and rock outcrops will not be significantly changed as a result of the Project. Impacts will be less than significant.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is an urbanized area. It is designated for Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) development and is within the boundaries of the Highway 111 East Specific Plan. The Specific Plan states that the hillsides encroaching onto the site should be preserved, and design elements such as architecture and landscaping should acknowledge the hillsides. Phase 1 of the Project is consistent with the City's vision for protecting and enhancing its visual resources, as set forth in the Rancho Mirage General Plan. Buildings are single-story and less than the maximum height permitted (35 ft.). Architectural colors and materials are consistent with others in the vicinity and complement the desert environment. The aesthetics of Phase 2 improvements are expected to be similar to those of Phase 1. If Phase 2 deviates from zoning and other requirements governing scenic quality, the City will determine whether additional review is necessary. Impacts to the visual quality of the Project area will be less than significant.
- d) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The Project will generate new sources of light and glare from buildings, indoor and outdoor lighting, autos accessing the site, and autos stored onsite. However, the Project will be subject to General Plan Community Design Element policies that promote protection of night skies from excessive glare. It will also be required to adhere to Highway 111 East Specific Plan and Zoning Code standards pertaining to lighting, including Code Section 17.30.140.G which addresses lighting for motor vehicle sales and limits night lighting to the minimum necessary at the discretion of the director. Project lighting plans will be reviewed and approved by the City as part of the Project review process.

#### Rancho Mirage Observatory

The subject property is ±325 feet south of the Rancho Mirage Observatory and maintaining low night lighting levels is essential to the operation of the observatory. The City is also within the Palomar restricted nighttime light zone that prohibits obtrusive nighttime lights, and such restrictions will also reduce Project-related light intrusion at the Rancho Mirage Observatory. Development plans for a previously proposed (2017) auto dealership on the subject property were reviewed by Dan McKenna at the Palomar Observatory, and recommendations were provided regarding lighting in proximity to an observatory (see Appendix E of





this document). To assure maximum protection of night skies at the local observatory, the Project shall incorporate these recommendations into its lighting plans, and the Planning Department shall review Project lighting plans for consistency with these recommendations (see Mitigation Measure AES-1). With implementation of standard zoning requirements and AES-1, impacts will be less than significant.

#### CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). Where a development project is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Sect. 4.5.3 (Lighting), Project-related "lighting shall be shielded and directed toward the developed area. Landscape shielding or other appropriate methods shall be incorporated in project designs to minimize the effects of lighting adjacent to or within the adjacent conservation area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual." Compliance with Mitigation Measure AES-2 will ensure that Project impacts to the Conservation Area are less than significant.

#### **Mitigation:**

##### **AES-1** Protection of Night Sky

The Project proponent shall incorporate the lighting recommendations provided by Dan McKenna at the Palomar Observatory on 11/26/2017 in reference to the Five Peaks Rancho Mirage car dealership expansion project into Project lighting plans, for the purpose of reducing night sky light intrusion at the Rancho Mirage Observatory. The City shall use the same recommendations in its review of Project lighting plans to assure that potential adverse lighting impacts are effectively minimized. A copy of the 11/26/2017 recommendation is provided in Appendix E of this document.

##### **AES-2** CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines: Lighting

Project lighting shall comply with CVMSHCP Section 4.5.3, which requires that "lighting shall be shielded and directed toward the developed area. Landscape shielding or other appropriate methods shall be incorporated in project designs to minimize the effects of lighting adjacent to or within the adjacent conservation area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual."

#### **Monitoring:**

**AES-A** The Planning Department shall review lighting plans to ensure that they meet both Palomar Observatory recommendations, and CVMSHCP requirements prior to the issuance of building permits for all buildings on the site.

**Responsible Party:** Planning Department

**Timeline:** prior to issuance of building permits



<b>2. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES</b> -- In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program, California Department of Conservation, 2016.

**Background:**

The City of Rancho Mirage contains no agricultural or forest lands, and no lands are designated for agricultural or forestry purposes in the General Plan. Agricultural production occurs in the eastern Coachella Valley, more than 10 miles east of the City.

- a-e) **No Impact.** The subject property consists of undeveloped, sparsely vegetated land and steep slopes of the Santa Rosa Mountains. There are no farmlands in the vicinity as designated by the General Plan Land Use Map or Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Department of Conservation. The subject property is not located on lands zoned for agriculture and is not covered by a Williamson Act contract. The Project will not affect forest lands or convert agricultural or forest lands to non-agricultural or non-forest uses. Therefore, no impact will occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



<b>3. AIR QUALITY</b> – Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** SCAQMD AQMP, 2016; Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> SIP, 2003; 2020 RTP/SCS, Demographics & Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, adopted September 3, 2020; CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2.

#### **Background:**

The City of Rancho Mirage is located in the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB), which is governed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). All development in the SSAB, including the proposed Project, is subject to the 2016 SCAQMD Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and 2003 PM<sub>10</sub> Coachella Valley State Implementation Plan. The 2022 AQMP and Draft Coachella Valley Extreme Area Plan are currently being developed to address requirements for meeting the 8-hour ozone standards by 2024, which will include stricter permitting requirements on major stationary sources. These plans establish control strategies and guidance on regional emission reductions for air pollutants.

The SSAB is currently a non-attainment area for PM<sub>10</sub> and ozone. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), in conjunction with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), Riverside County, and Rancho Mirage and other local jurisdictions, prepared the “2003 Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> State Implementation Plan,” which includes PM<sub>10</sub> control program enhancements and requests an extension of the region’s PM<sub>10</sub> attainment date. The Coachella Valley is designated as a serious non-attainment area for PM<sub>10</sub> and is subject to the 2003 State Implementation Plan (SIP) and local dust control regulations and guidelines. A State Implementation Plan that addresses how Southern California will meet federal standards for finer particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) was adopted in 2007. The Coachella Valley is designated as unclassifiable/attainment for PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

**Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)** is formed when byproducts of combustion react in the presence of ultraviolet sunlight. This process occurs in the atmosphere where oxides of nitrogen combine with reactive organic gases, such as hydrocarbons, in the presence of sunlight. Ozone is a pungent, colorless, toxic gas, and a common component of photochemical smog. Although also produced within the Coachella Valley, most ozone pollutants are transported by coastal air mass from the Los Angeles and Riverside/San Bernardino air basins, thereby contributing to occasionally high ozone concentrations in the Valley. The Coachella Valley has a history of exceeding regulatory ozone standards, although the number of days and months the Federal one-hour standard is exceeded has dropped steadily over the past decade.





Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) consists of fine suspended particles of ten microns or smaller in diameter, and is the byproduct of road dust, sand, diesel soot, windstorms, and the abrasion of tires and brakes. The elderly, children, and adults with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease are most susceptible to the effects of PM. Elevated PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels are also associated with an increase in mortality rates, respiratory infections, occurrences and severity of asthma attacks, and hospital admissions. The SSAB is a non-attainment area for PM<sub>10</sub> and is classified as attainment/unclassifiable for PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

The proposed Project will result in site grading and new development that has the potential to impact air quality, including the emissions of particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>), ozone precursors, and other criteria pollutants.

- a) **No Impact.** A project is considered to be in conformity with adopted air quality plans if it adheres to the requirements of the SCAQMD Rule Book<sup>1</sup>, AQMP<sup>2</sup>, and adopted and forthcoming control measures, and is consistent with growth forecasts in the applicable plan(s) (or is directly included in the applicable plan). Conformity with growth forecasts can be established by demonstrating that a project is consistent with the land use plan that was used to generate the growth forecast. A non-conforming project would be one that increases the gross number of dwelling units, increases the number of trips, and/or increases the overall vehicle miles traveled in an affected area relative to the applicable land use plan.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) adopted the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020 RTP/SCS) to comply with metropolitan planning organization (MPO) requirements under the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act. The RTP/SCS Growth Management chapter forms the basis of land use and transportation controls of the AQMP. Projects that are consistent with the population forecasts are considered consistent with the AQMP. SCAG forecasts that the City's population will be 25,200 in 2045.<sup>3</sup>

The proposed Project is consistent with District 10 of the Highway 111 East Specific Plan and the Neighborhood Commercial zone. The East Highway 111 Specific Plan was used to develop population forecasts in the above-described RTP/SCS, and the RTP/SCS served as the basis for the AQMP. Therefore, the Project will be consistent with the AQMP, and no conflict will occur. The Project will be part of anticipated growth. It does not propose residential development and will not have a direct impact on population growth. Phase 1 will result in the relocation of existing auto dealerships and existing jobs from Cathedral City to Rancho Mirage. Existing employees are not expected to relocate to the City as a result of the Project, and any potential attraction of new employees to the City will be minimal. The Project will not result in population growth that exceeds RTP/SCS forecasts. No conflict will occur.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** A project is considered to have significant impacts if there is a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. As previously stated, the SSAB is currently a non-attainment area for PM<sub>10</sub> and ozone. Therefore, if the project's construction and operational emissions exceed SCAQMD thresholds for PM<sub>10</sub> and ozone precursors, which include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrous oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), and volatile/reactive organic compounds (VOC or ROG), then impacts would be cumulatively considerable and significant.

<sup>1</sup> "South Coast Air Quality Management District Rules and Regulations," adopted February 4, 1977 and last updated February 7, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> "Final 2016 Air Quality Management Plan," South Coast Air Quality Management District, March 2017.

<sup>3</sup> 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, adopted September 3, 2020.



The following air quality analysis for the proposed Project is based on the project description, grading estimates, and projected trip generation provided in the Traffic Impact Analysis (Urban Crossroads, December 19, 2020). Projected emissions were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2, a computer model used to estimate anticipated emissions associated with land development projects in California. CalEEMod calculates criteria pollutant emissions, including CO, SO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and the ozone precursors ROG and NO<sub>x</sub>. CalEEMod input data and output tables are provided in Appendix A of this Initial Study. The analysis assumes a buildout year of 2022.

#### Construction Emission Impacts

For analysis purposes, it is assumed that construction will occur over a 2-year period with buildout in 2022. Construction would include site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and the application of architectural coatings.

As shown in Table 2, emissions generated by construction activities will not exceed SCAQMD thresholds for any criteria pollutant during construction. The data reflect average daily unmitigated emissions over the 2-year construction period, including summer and winter weather conditions. Applicable standard requirements and best management practices include, but are not limited to, the implementation of a dust control and management plan in conformance with SCAQMD Rule 403, proper maintenance and limited idling of heavy equipment, phased application of architectural coatings, and the use of low-polluting architectural paint and coatings per SCAQMD Rule 1113.

Given that criteria pollutant emissions will not be exceeded, and standard best management practices will be applied during construction, impacts will be less than significant.

**Table 2**  
**Maximum Daily Construction-Related Emissions Summary**  
**(lbs./day)**

	CO	NO <sub>x</sub>	ROG	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Maximum Daily Emissions	53.5	54.0	19.5	0.5	9.5	6.0
<b>SCAQMD Threshold</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Exceeds Threshold?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Source: CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2. See Appendix A for detailed output tables. Value shown represents the average emissions of summer and winter outputs. Numbers have been rounded up to the nearest half number.						

#### Operational Emission Impacts

Operational emissions are ongoing emissions that will occur over the life of the project. They include area source emissions, emissions from energy demand (electricity), and mobile source (vehicle) emissions.

According to the Traffic Impact Analysis, the proposed Project will generate approximately 2,490 trip-ends per day. Table 3 summarizes projected emissions during operation of the proposed Project at build out. As shown, operational emissions will not exceed SCAQMD thresholds of significance for any criteria pollutants for operations. Impacts related to operational emissions will be less than significant.



**Table 3**  
**Maximum Daily Operational-Related Emissions Summary**  
(lbs./day)

	CO	NO <sub>x</sub>	ROG	SO <sub>x</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
Area	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Energy	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Mobile	45.0	42.5	5.5	0.5	9.0	2.5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>SCAQMD Threshold</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Exceeds Threshold?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

Source: CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2. See Appendix A for detailed output tables. Value shown represents the average emissions of summer and winter outputs. Numbers have been rounded up to the nearest half number.

#### Cumulative Contribution

A significant impact could occur if the Project would make a considerable cumulative contribution to federal or state non-attainment pollutants. The Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB is classified as a “non-attainment” area for PM<sub>10</sub> and ozone. Cumulative air quality analysis is evaluated on a regional scale (rather than a neighborhood or city scale, for example), given the dispersing nature of pollutant emissions and aggregate impacts from surrounding jurisdictions and air management districts. Any development project or activity resulting in emissions of PM<sub>10</sub>, ozone, or ozone precursors will contribute, to some degree, to regional non-attainment designations of ozone and PM<sub>10</sub>.

The SCAQMD does not currently recommend quantified analyses of construction and/or operational emissions from multiple development projects, nor does it provide methodologies or thresholds of significance to be used to assess the significance of cumulative emissions generated by multiple cumulative projects. However, it is recommended that a project’s potential contribution to cumulative impacts should be assessed utilizing the same significance criteria as those for project-specific impacts. Furthermore, SCAQMD states that if an individual development project generates less than significant construction or operational emissions, then the development project would not generate a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Basin is in nonattainment.

As shown in the tables above, Project-related PM<sub>10</sub>, CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, and ROG emissions are projected to be below established SCAQMD thresholds. Emissions will be further reduced through required best management practices, which require implementation of a Dust Control Plan in accordance with SCAQMD Rule 403.1. Therefore, the Project will result in incremental, but not cumulatively considerable impacts on regional PM<sub>10</sub> or ozone levels.

#### Summary

As shown above, both construction and operation of the proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. Overall, impacts related to construction and operation will be less than significant and are not cumulatively considerable from a nonattainment standpoint.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, retirement homes, hospitals, and other land uses occupied by individuals who are potentially more sensitive to pollutants than the average. The nearest sensitive receptors to the subject property are: 1) residential units 365± feet to the southeast on Sahara Road, 2) residential units at San Jacinto Villas 350±



feet to the northeast on San Jacinto Drive, and 3) residential units at Thunderbird Palms, 580± feet to the northwest on Paxton Drive. Project construction will result in disturbance of soils and operation of equipment that will generate pollutant emissions and particulate matter and could pose health risks to sensitive receptors. However, the Project will be developed in two phases, with Parcel 1 (±6.5 acres) developed first and Parcel 2 (±9.44 acres) developed afterward, such that construction impacts will not occur all at once.

To determine if the Project has the potential to generate significant adverse localized air quality impacts, the mass rate Localized Significance Threshold (LST) Look-Up Table was used. Based on the Project's size, the sizes of Phases 1 and 2, and proximity to sensitive receptors, the 5-acre tables at a distance of 100 meters were used for air quality analysis. Table 4 shows on-site emission concentrations for Project construction will not exceed LST thresholds. Because the proposed land uses do not include major stationary polluters (such as a landfill, chemical plant, oil field, refinery, etc.), LST analysis was not required or conducted for Project operations. Overall, the impacts will be less than significant.

**Table 4**  
**Localized Significance Thresholds Emissions**  
**(pounds per day)**

<b>Construction</b>	<b>CO</b>	<b>NOx</b>	<b>PM<sub>10</sub></b>	<b>PM<sub>2.5</sub></b>
Maximum Emissions <sup>1</sup>	53.5	54.0	9.5	6.0
<b>LST Threshold</b>	5,331	425	67	19
<b>Exceeds Threshold?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Emission Source: CalEEMod, version 2016.3.2 LST Threshold Source: Source Receptor Area 30, LST Mass Rate Look-up Table, SCAQMD <sup>1</sup> Operational emissions that affect sensitive receptors are limited to on-site area emissions. Energy and mobile emissions occur off-site.				

#### Health Impacts

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, construction and operation of the proposed Project will result in criteria emissions that are below the SCAQMD significance thresholds, and neither would violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation.

It is not scientifically possible to calculate the degree to which exposure to various levels of criteria pollutant emissions will impact an individual's health. There are several factors that make predicting a Project-specific numerical impact difficult:

- Not all individuals will be affected equally due to medical history. Some may have medical pre-dispositions and diet and exercise levels tend to vary across a population.
- Due to the dispersing nature of pollutants, it is difficult to locate and identify which group of individuals will be impacted, either directly or indirectly.
- There are currently no approved methodologies or studies to base assumptions on, such as baseline health levels or emission level-to-health risk ratios.

Due to these limitations, the extent to which the Project poses a health risk is uncertain but unavoidable. It is anticipated that the impacts associated with all criteria pollutants will be less than significant overall, and that health effects will also be less than significant.

#### CO Hot Spot

After construction, loose soils will be stabilized by buildings, paved surfaces, and landscaping. Long-term operation of the Project will generate pollutants from vehicles accessing the site. Traffic may have the potential to contribute to local area air quality impacts, most notably the creation of CO "hot spots" at



heavily congested intersections. Because CO is produced in greatest quantities from vehicle combustion and does not readily disperse into the atmosphere, these hot spots have the potential to exceed the state 1-hour standard of 20 ppm and/or the 8-hour standard of 9 ppm. SCAQMD recommends an evaluation of potential localized CO impacts when a project causes the level of service (LOS) at a study intersection to worsen from C to D, or if a project increases the traffic volume (or demand) to capacity (V/C) ratio at any intersection rated D or worse by 2 percent or more. As discussed in Section 17, Transportation, the Traffic Impact Analysis conducted for the Project studied 18 intersections in the Project area. All study intersections operate at LOS C or better under existing (2020) conditions, Existing/Ambient/Project (EAP) (2022) With Project traffic conditions, and Existing/Ambient/Project/Cumulative (EAPC) (2022) With Project traffic conditions. Under Horizon Year (2040) conditions, the Project would not cause the LOS to worsen from C to D at any intersection and would not increase the V/C ratio at any intersection rated D by 2 percent or more. As such, none of the studied intersections would meet these evaluation criteria, and therefore, the proposed Project would not result in the creation of a CO hotspot. Sensitive receptors would not be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations as the result of Project traffic, and impacts would be less than significant.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The occurrence and severity of odor impacts depend on numerous factors, including nature, frequency, and intensity of the source; wind speed and direction; and sensitivity of the receptors. SCAQMD identifies certain land uses as sources of odors. These land uses include agriculture (farming and livestock), wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting facilities, refineries, landfills, transfer stations, and fiberglass molding.

The Project will be developed with commercial uses and has the potential to result in short-term odors associated with operation of heavy equipment during grading, excavation, and other construction activities. Odors from paints, coatings, and asphalts also will be emitted during construction. However, construction-related odors will be temporary and quickly dispersed below detectable levels as distance from the construction area increases. Existing regulations such as SCAQMD Rule 403.1 and Rule 481 would continue to minimize odor impacts. Long-term operation of the Project is not expected to result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, that would affect a substantial number of people. Odors associated with auto maintenance and repair, such as petroleum products and chemicals, will be contained within the service centers which will be properly ventilated. Impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**Monitoring:** None required.



4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan, 2017; Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP), 2007; Biological Resources Assessment Report, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc., November 13, 2020.

#### Background:

The subject property is within the boundaries of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and adjacent to a CVMSHCP conservation area. A Peninsular bighorn sheep fence extends along its southern boundary and was built several years ago to prevent this endangered species from accessing urban lands. The subject property includes undeveloped desert lands that may harbor bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and/or other species not covered or addressed by the CVMSHCP.

A biological resources assessment was prepared for the subject property by Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. on November 13, 2020.

- a) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The proposed Project will result in grading, site preparation, construction, and paving on ±15.94 acres of the largely flat portion of the subject property. Much of this acreage has been disturbed by vehicle parking, off-road vehicle use, previous grading activities, and dumping. However, the Project would alter the ground surface and remove existing vegetation. The Project would conserve ±9.61 acres of mountain foothills and slopes as Hillside Reserve (H-R).





A biological field survey was conducted on the subject property and a 500-foot radius around the property (where possible) in October 2020. No special status species were observed onsite. A literature review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), CDFW Special Animals List, CNPS Inventory of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants of California, and other relevant documents identified fifty-one (51) “sensitive” or “special status” species known to occur within  $\pm 1$ -mile radius of the subject property. They include 29 plants, 4 amphibians and reptiles, 10 birds, 7 mammals, and 1 sensitive habitat. However, nearly all the species are considered absent from the site or have a very low or low probability of occurring onsite due to a lack of suitable habitat and/or the subject property is outside of the species’ geographic range. Six (6) plant species have a “moderate” probability of occurring onsite: 1) glandular ditaxis, 2) California ditaxis, 3) Abram’s spurge, 4) Arizona spurge, 5) flat-seeded spurge, and 6) slender woolly-heads. However, no special status species were observed onsite.

#### CVMSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fee

The subject property is within the boundaries of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP), a comprehensive regional plan encompassing approximately 1.1 million acres that addresses the conservation needs of 27 special status plant and animal species and 27 natural vegetation communities in the Coachella Valley. It establishes a system of reserves to protect lands with high conservation values, sets forth conservation objectives and measures for covered species, and streamlines compliance with environmental conservation laws.

The City is a CVMSHCP Permittee and is required to collect the mandated local development mitigation fee (LDMF) from new development. The Project will be required to pay this fee to mitigate impacts to Covered species that may result from the Project. Covered species with the potential to occur onsite include: 1) Coachella Valley milk vetch, 2) desert tortoise, 3) burrowing owl, 4) LeConte’s thrasher, 5) Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, 6) Palm Springs pocket mouse, and 7) Peninsular bighorn sheep (PBS). The Project-specific biological survey determined the likelihood of each of these species to occur onsite was absent, low, or very low. Nonetheless, Project-related impacts to Covered special status species would be mitigated through payment of the LDMF fee, and impacts would be less than significant. Additional mitigation required for burrowing owl is described below.

#### CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area which contains essential habitat for PBS and potential and suitable habitat for approximately 17 other sensitive species.<sup>4</sup> Per CVMSHCP Section 4.5, where a development project is adjacent to or within a Conservation Area, it is required to implement Land Use Adjacency Guidelines, as described in Table 5. They are intended to minimize indirect “edge” effects of urbanization on the Conservation Area. Compliance with the guidelines is a standard requirement for any project adjacent to a Conservation Area. Compliance will ensure that impacts to the Conservation Area and special status species within its boundaries are less than significant.

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<sup>4</sup> Table 4-107, Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan, September 2008.



**Table 5**  
**CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines**

<b>Requirement per CVMSHCP Section 4.5</b>	<b>Project Impact</b>
<b>Sect. 4.5.1, Drainage:</b> Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate plans to ensure the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent Conservation Area is not altered in an adverse way when compared with existing conditions. Stormwater systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystem processes within the adjacent Conservation Area.	See response to question 10.a (Hydrology)
<b>Sect. 4.5.2, Toxics:</b> Land uses proposed adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that use chemicals or generates bioproducts, such as manure, that are potentially toxic or may adversely affect wildlife and plant species, habitat, or water quality, it shall incorporate measures to ensure the application of such chemicals does not result in any discharge to the adjacent Conservation Area.	See response to question 9.b (Hazards, Hazardous Materials)
<b>Sect. 4.5.3, Lighting:</b> For proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area, lighting shall be shielded and directed toward the developed area. Landscape shielding or other appropriate methods shall be incorporated into project designs to minimize the effects of lighting adjacent to or within the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.	See response to question 1.d (Aesthetics)
<b>Sect. 4.5.4, Noise:</b> Proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that generates noise in excess of 75 dBA $L_{eq}$ hourly shall incorporate setbacks, berms, or walls, as appropriate, to minimize the effects of noise on the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.	See response to question 13.a (Noise)
<b>Sect. 4.5.5, Invasives:</b> Invasive, non-native plant species shall not be incorporated in the landscape for land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area. Landscape treatments within or adjacent to a Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are lists in [CVMSHCP] Table 4-112. The plants listed in [CVMSHCP] Table 4-113 shall not be used within or adjacent to a Conservation Area. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agency concurrence.	To mitigate potential Project-related impacts, Project landscaping shall be subject to these measures (see Mitigation Measure BIO-1). With mitigation, impacts will be less than significant.
<b>Sect. 4.5.6, Barriers:</b> Land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate barriers in individual project designs to minimize unauthorized public access, domestic animal predation, illegal trespass, or dumping in a Conservation Area. Such barriers may include native landscaping, rocks/boulders, fencing, walls and/or signage.	This requirement is already satisfied by the existing PBS fence along the southern property boundary. No additional mitigation is required.
<b>Sect. 4.5.7, Grading/Land Development:</b> Manufactured slopes associated with site development shall not extend into adjacent land in a Conservation Area.	See response to question 7.c (Geology and Soils)

#### Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Fence

The southern portion of the subject property is adjacent to rocky slopes of the Santa Rosa Mountains that are inhabited by Peninsular bighorn sheep (PBS). PBS is listed as “endangered” under the federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and “threatened” under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). It is also a fully protected species under California Fish and Wildlife Code 4700. The City built an 8-foot high sheep fence along the toe-of-slope of the entire length of the subject property’s southern boundary to prohibit PBS access to urbanized lands and associated hazards. The fence line follows the zoning line between the Hillside Reserve (H-R) and Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) zoning districts. The proposed





Project will have no impact on the fence; the fence will remain in place, and no development will occur in proximity to or south of it. However, Bighorn Institute staff must be able to access the fence for routine fence inspection and PBS fieldwork (Mitigation Measure BIO-2), and public access to sheep habitat from the subject property must be prohibited (Mitigation Measure BIO-3). With implementation of BIO-2 and BIO-3, impacts to PBS will be less than significant.

#### Burrowing Owls

The burrowing owl is a Species of Special Concern (State designation) and a covered species under the CVMSHCP but is still protected from take. It is also protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and CDFW code. The species nests and roosts underground, including along canals and flood control channels, and is particularly sensitive to noise and ground disturbance, such as grading and construction, up to 500 feet away. No natural burrows with owls and/or owl sign were observed during the October 2020 site survey. However, the site contains burrows of other small mammals and man-made structures potentially suitable for owl habitation. To mitigate potential Project-related impacts and avoid take of the species outside of conservation areas, the CDFW recommends two take avoidance surveys. The first should occur between 14 and 30 days prior to ground disturbance and the second within 24 hours of ground disturbance (Mitigation Measure BIO-4). With implementation of BIO-4, Project-related impacts to burrowing owls will be less than significant.

#### Nesting Birds

A variety of special status and common bird species known to occur or potentially occurring in the Project area are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). To avoid impacts to nesting birds, the Project should avoid clearing of vegetation during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31). If avoidance of the nesting season is not feasible, additional impact avoidance and minimization measures may be necessary (Mitigation Measure BIO-5). With implementation of BIO-5, impacts to migratory bird species will be less than significant.

- b) **No Impact.** There are no known riparian habitat or sensitive natural communities on the subject property. The West Magnesia Storm Channel, a blue-line stream (drainage) is adjacent to the easterly property boundary. However, the concrete channel is fenced and will not be affected by the proposed Project.
- c) **No Impact.** The subject property does not contain state or federally protected wetlands, marshes, vernal pools, or coastal resources. It is adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel; however, the channel is concrete lined and fenced, and the Project will not result in removal, fill, or hydrological interruption of drainage flow. No impact will occur.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property does not serve as an established wildlife corridor or nursery site. It is bounded on the north by Highway 111, on the east by the West Magnesia Storm Channel, and on the northwest by a veterinarian office, which act as barriers to the movement of wildlife. It is bounded on the south by the Peninsular bighorn sheep fence, which prohibits the movement of sheep onto the site and likely restricts the movement of some other wildlife. The site has been disturbed by previous grading activities, parking of automobiles, off-highway vehicle use, and illegal dumping, which has reduced the amount and quality of potential habitat. Remaining vegetation may be used by migratory birds, bats, or other small species. Potential impacts to individual sensitive species would be reduced by implementation of the mitigation measures listed below. Project-related impacts to wildlife movement and nursery sites will be less than significant.



- e) **No Impact.** The Project would comply with relevant policies and ordinances protecting biological resources, including those that limit development and otherwise protect Hillside Reserve (H-R) areas. No Project-related impact will occur.
- f) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** As described in Response 4.a., above, the City is a Permittee to the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). The subject property is within the boundaries of the CVMSHCP and, therefore, the Project will be required to pay mandated local development mitigation fee to mitigate impacts to Covered species. Additionally, the southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area. As such, the Project is subject to the CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of urbanization on the conservation area. With payment of the local development mitigation fee and compliance with the Land Use Adjacency Guidelines, Project-related impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:**

**BIO-1** CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines: Landscaping

Project landscaping shall be subject to CVMSHCP Sect. 4.5.5 (Invasives), as follows:

Invasive, non-native plant species shall not be incorporated in the landscape for land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area. Landscape treatments within or adjacent to a Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are listed in [CVMSHCP] Table 4-112. The plants listed in [CVMSHCP] Table 4-113 shall not be used within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.

**Responsible Party:** Project landscape architect, Developer, Contractor

**Timeline:** prior to issuance of building permits, ongoing during the life of the Project

**BIO-2** Sheep Fence Easement

The Final Parcel Map shall include a maintenance easement on each side of the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep fence to allow the Bighorn Institute access for repairs and observations. Alternatively, the owner(s) of the subject property and the Director of the Bighorn Institute may negotiate a mutually satisfactory arrangement for such purposes.

**BIO-3** Sheep Fence Access

To ensure potential impacts to Peninsular Bighorn Sheep remain at less than significant levels,

1. Bighorn Institute staff shall be permitted access to the PBS fence at all times, including during Project construction, in order to conduct fence inspections and fieldwork duties with regard to the sheep.
2. The Bighorn Institute maintains vegetation around the Project in accordance with the USFWS Recovery Plan. Vegetation shall be planted at a conservative distance from the fence and shall not serve as an attractant to the sheep. Vegetation shall remain trimmed so it does not extend through or over the top of the fence. No poisonous plants, such as oleander, shall be planted on the property where leaves could blow into Bighorn habitat.
3. There shall be no public access to the sheep habitat from the subject property.
4. The property owner shall allow the Bighorn Institute staff access to walk the entire length of the Bighorn fence at least once a month and also allow access through the fence as necessary relative to Bighorn sheep issues per the Institute's contract with the City of Rancho Mirage and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The fencing shall be subject to these conditions of access by the Institute.



#### **BIO-4** Burrowing Owl Surveys

To mitigate potential impacts to burrowing owl, two (2) pre-construction surveys shall be conducted in accordance with CDFW protocol. The first survey shall occur between 14 and 30 days prior to ground disturbance, and the second shall occur within 24 hours of the initiation of ground disturbance activities.

- If no owls are detected during those surveys, ground disturbance may proceed without further consideration of this species, assuming there is no lapse between the surveys and construction, because as the protocol states “time lapses between Project activities trigger subsequent take avoidance surveys including but not limited to a final survey conducted within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance.”
- If burrowing owls are detected during the take avoidance surveys, avoidance and minimization measures shall be required and the need for mitigation for unavoidable impacts triggered. Avoidance and minimization measures may include establishing a buffer zone, installing a visual barrier, implementing burrow exclusion and/or closure techniques, in conformance with CDFW protocol.

#### **BIO-5** Migratory Bird Treaty Act

If ground disturbance or tree or plant removal is proposed between February 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>, a qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey within 7 to 10 days of initiation of grading onsite, focusing on MBTA covered species. If active nests are reported, then species-specific measures shall be prepared. At a minimum, grading in the vicinity of a nest shall be postponed until the young birds have fledged. For construction that occurs between September 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>, no pre-removal nesting bird survey is required.

- In the event active nests are found, exclusionary fencing shall be placed 200 feet around the nest until such time as nestlings have fledged. Nests of raptors shall be provided a 500-foot buffer. Ground disturbance between September 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup> shall be exempt from this requirement.

#### **Monitoring:**

**BIO-A** The City will review all landscaping plans to assure that plants on the south side of the projects are not included in the CVMSHCP Prohibited Plant List (Table 4-113), and that native plants are used in this area to the greatest extent possible.

**Responsible Party:** Planning Department

**Timeline:** Prior to issuance of building permits

**BIO-B** The City shall assure that an easement or agreement is finalized to allow access by Bighorn Institute onto the south side of the property for PBS research and monitoring. Any agreement shall be documented in writing and signed by both parties, and a copy shall be provided to the City.

**Responsible Party:** City Engineer, Planning Department

**Timeline:** Prior to recordation of Final Map

**BIO-B** The City shall assure that an easement or agreement is finalized to allow access by Bighorn Institute onto the south side of the property for PBS research and monitoring. Any agreement shall be documented in writing and signed by both parties, and a copy shall be provided to the City.

**Responsible Party:** City Engineer, Planning Department

**Timeline:** Prior to recordation of Final Map

**BIO-C** The Project biologist shall supply the City with reports of findings regarding burrowing owls and migratory birds. The reports will be attached to the grading permit for each project.

**Responsible Party:** City Engineer, Planning Department

**Timeline:** Prior to issuance of grading permits



5. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; “Update to Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey, Rancho Mirage Auto Dealership Project, Portion of APN 684-190-007, City of Rancho Mirage,” CRM Tech, November 5, 2020; “Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, APNs 684-130-025 to -027, 684-190-001 and -002, City of Rancho Mirage,” CRM Tech, March 28, 2008; City of Rancho Mirage Historic Resources Survey, Leslie Heumann and Associates, February 3, 2003.

#### **Background:**

The subject property is adjacent to and partially within the Santa Rosa Mountains and foothills that once served as a source of food, shelter, and fiber for Native Americans. It is bounded on the north by Highway 111 that was the route of the Cocomaricopa Trail used by Native Americans and later by early Europeans. In the Project vicinity, Native American cultural resources, including pottery scatters, grinding rocks, trail segments, and rock cairn features, have been found and documented.

In 2008, a historical/archaeological resources survey report was prepared by CRM Tech for a previous development proposal on the subject property. An update to the 2008 report was prepared by CRM Tech on November 5, 2020.

- a) **No Impact.** A 2008 Phase I cultural resources survey and a November 2020 update were conducted on the subject property and its vicinity to evaluate the presence and significance of potential historic resources. Twelve (12) historic-period buildings have been recorded within a one-mile radius of the subject property. One (1) building was built in the western portion of the property during the 1940s-1950s but was no longer extant by the 1980s. The current auto parking lot was established in the northwest portion of the property in 2018-2019. No historical buildings or features of significance are located onsite. Modern refuse of no historical or archaeological interest, and evidence of off-road vehicle use, were observed throughout the site during the November 2020 field inspection.

Additionally, the City maintains an inventory of potential historic resources within its boundaries. It includes properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Registered Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and properties reviewed by the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) as part of a historic resources survey or an environmental review. No registered historic resources in the inventory are located on the subject property. Therefore, the proposed Project will not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. No impact will occur.

- b) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** As noted in the background discussion above, the subject property is within a culturally sensitive area. The 2008 Phase I cultural resources survey and November 2020 update conducted on the subject property identified 17 prehistoric archaeological sites within a one-mile radius of the site. Additionally, two (2) previously recorded archaeological sites were identified within or just outside the subject site:



1. A 75-meter possible aboriginal trail segment in the southeasterly portion of the subject property, near the West Magnesia Storm Channel and recorded in 1978. During the 2008 field survey, no other archaeological features or artifacts were found in the trail vicinity and it demonstrated no prehistoric or historic characteristics. The remnants of the site were determined not to meet CEQA's definition of a "historical resource." During the November 2020 field survey, the trail segment was observed south of the PBS sheep fence, and no portion of it was found within the current Project boundaries.
2. Two rock features observed in the same vicinity as the above-described trail segment. They were recorded in 1978 but not found during the 2008 field reconnaissance.

In a November 2, 2020 letter, the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) reported that the Sacred Lands File identified no Native American cultural resources in or near the Project area.

No significant archaeological resources have been identified on the subject property and, therefore, the Project is not expected to adversely impact archaeological resources. However, given its proximity to the Santa Rosa Mountains and traditional use area of the Cahuilla people, and the fact that some archaeological features have been detected on or near the property in the past, future Project-related ground disturbing activities have the potential to uncover buried archaeological resources. In order to assure that this impact does not occur, monitoring by a qualified archaeologist and Tribal monitor should be implemented (see Mitigation Measure CUL-1). With implementation of CUL-1, Project-related impacts to archaeological resources will be less than significant.

- c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The subject property does not contain a dedicated cemetery and is not known to contain human remains. However, it is within the traditional use area of the Cahuilla people, as evidenced by the discovery of Native American cultural resources in the area. Ground-disturbing activities associated with Project development could lead to the discovery of buried human remains. If human remains are discovered, state law requires that law enforcement be contacted and the remains be removed in a prescribed manner (see Mitigation Measure CUL-2). Within implementation of CUL-2, impacts to human remains would be less than significant.

#### **Mitigation:**

**CUL-1** All earth-moving operations associated with the Project, including grubbing, grading and excavations, shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist and ACBCI Tribal monitor. The archaeologist shall be empowered to stop earth moving activities in the area where the resource is found, to quickly assess its value and method of disposition, and to curate the resource at a recognized repository following completion of grading activities.

**CUL-2** Should buried human remains be discovered during Project construction, in accordance with State law, the County coroner shall be contacted. If the remains are determined to be of Native American heritage, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and the appropriate local Native American Tribe shall be contacted to determine the Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The City shall work with the designated MLD to determine the final disposition of the remains.

#### **Monitoring:**

**CUL-A** The project proponent shall provide the City with a fully executed copy of a monitoring agreement for a qualified archaeological monitor and a Tribal monitor. The agreement will be kept on file in the Planning Department. Within 30 days of completion of monitoring, the Project archaeologist shall provide the City with a report of findings.

**Responsible Party:** Planning Department

**Timeline:** Prior to issuance of grading permit.



6. ENERGY -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017.

#### Background:

Primary energy sources include fossil fuels (oil, coal, and natural gas), nuclear, and renewable sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower. New construction and renovation is required to conform to the California Green Building Standards Code, which further serves to ensure that energy resources are used economically and wisely. The City established the *Rancho Mirage Energy Authority* (RMEA), a local renewable electric service provider. City customers automatically benefit from RMEA's 5% discount on electricity. For solar customers, RMEA doubles the rebate for excess energy put back onto the grid over the SCE rebate. The RMEA makes it easy for residents and businesses to take advantage of renewable sources of electric power.

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is within the service boundaries of Southern California Edison (electric power) and SoCalGas (natural gas) and the Project area is well-served by these providers. The Project will implement sustainable building design, including the use of high pre- and post-consumer content, recycled content, or renewable resources, and the use of Energy Star appliances. Landscape materials will be compatible with the desert environment and CVWD's water-efficiency requirements. The Phase 1 parking lot includes a connection for a future charging station for electric vehicles. Impacts will be less than significant.
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed Project would not obstruct implementation of a state or local plan for renewable energy or to achieve greater energy efficiency. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**Monitoring:** None required.





7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017, Exhibits 21-25; "Updated Geotechnical Recommendations Report and Infiltration Test Results, 5 Peaks Service Facility at Rancho Mirage," Petra Geosciences, Inc. January 27, 2020.

### Background:

The Project site is in the western portion of the Coachella Valley, which is the northwestern extension of the Salton Trough, a tectonic depression formed by regional faulting. The Salton Trough is roughly 130 miles long and 70 miles wide and extends from the San Geronio Pass to the Gulf of Mexico. Regional soils range from rocky outcrops within the mountains bordering the valley, to coarse gravels of mountain canyons and recently laid fine- and medium-grained alluvial (stream-deposited) and aeolian (wind-deposited) sediments on the central valley floor. Sediments from the surrounding mountains are carried into and across the valley through seasonal streams. The Whitewater River, which generally flows northwest to southeast, is the master drainage for the valley. Episodic flooding of major regional drainages results in the deposition of sand and gravel on the valley floor.



In 2007, a geotechnical investigation was prepared by Landmark to evaluate geologic conditions on the subject property in conjunction with a previous development proposal. It was supplemented by a rockfall hazard geological investigation performed by Petra Geosciences in 2008. Petra Geosciences provided an updated geotechnical recommendations report for the proposed Project on January 27, 2020.

a) i. **No Impact.** The subject property is not located in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone, and there are no active faults in the immediate Project vicinity. Therefore, there is no identified threat of ground rupture due to an earthquake on an underlying fault. The nearest active faults are those associated with the San Andreas Fault Zone located 7.5± miles to the northeast.

ii. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The subject property is in a region with numerous active earthquake faults. The San Andreas Fault is capable of generating a moment magnitude 7.4 earthquake. At least two active branches of the San Andreas Fault Zone pass northwest/southeast through the valley north of the city limits. Other faults in the region, including the San Jacinto and San Geronio Pass faults, also have the potential to produce strong ground shaking in Rancho Mirage. The subject property would be exposed to strong ground shaking during a major quake on nearby faults and could expose people and structures to related risks. The Project will be required to comply with the current (2019) edition of the California Building Code (CBC) which includes seismic safety specifications and requirements. Adherence to the CBC and the seismic design and other recommendations in the project-specific geotechnical investigation (Petra, 2020) (see Mitigation Measure GEO-7) will reduce potential impacts associated with strong seismic ground shaking to less than significant levels.

iii. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.**

Seismically-Induced Liquefaction

The Project area is characterized by fine-grained granular sediments that are normally susceptible to liquefaction, but groundwater depths are greater than 50 feet which typically precludes liquefaction. The Project-specific geotechnical investigation (2020) found that the depth to groundwater in the Project vicinity is generally considered to be greater than 200 feet below the ground surface, and the liquefaction potential at the subject property is considered negligible. Therefore, Project-related impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Seismically-Induced Dry Sand Settlement

Strong ground motion can rearrange the structure of granular soils such that vertical settlement occurs among dry, clean sands of uniform grain size and in fine-grained soils. The geotechnical analysis estimated that total seismically-induced (dynamic) settlement of around 2.4 inches could occur onsite after remedial grading, with a corresponding differential settlement of approximately 1.2 inches or less over a distance of 30 feet. Compliance with the site preparation, grading, fill placement, and other earthwork recommendations provided in the project-specific geotechnical analysis (Petra, 2020) (see Mitigation Measures GEO-1, GEO-4, and GEO-7) will reduce potential settlement hazards to less than significant levels

iv. **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.**

Landslide

The site-specific geotechnical investigation found no evidence of ancient or recent landslides. Therefore, no Project-related impact would occur.

Rockfall

The southern portion of the subject property is within the steep slopes and foothills of the Santa Rosa Mountains. According to the 2008 and 2020 site-specific rockfall investigations, the western slope area consists of primarily boulder-sized talus and debris covered with limited rock outcrop that is grossly stable. The eastern slopes have pronounced rock outcrops 40+ feet above the toe-of-slope and larger rock in the





debris at the toe. Geologic mapping shows that most rockfalls do not extend to the base of the talus slopes, but rockfalls have the potential to roll approximately 5 to 15 feet onto the relatively flat alluvial surface at the toe-of-slope. Project-related modifications to the slope geometry, such as excavation into the toe-of-slope due to proposed grading may somewhat compromise the stability of the slope. The geotechnical report recommends construction of rockfall barriers along the talus slopes to prevent rockfall rollout into areas to be developed (see Mitigation Measure GEO-5) and removal of loose rock and boulders from the face of the exposed bedrock slopes (see Mitigation Measure GEO-6). With implementation of GEO-5 and GEO-6, impacts will be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the Rancho Mirage General Plan (Exhibit 25), the subject property is in a slight wind erosion hazard zone. Future development and improvements facilitated by the Project will result in ground disturbance, including site preparation and grading, that has the potential to increase soil erosion. At buildout, the Project will include new structures, paved surfaces, and landscaping that will stabilize ground surfaces and resist erosion. The Project will be required to submit and implement a site-specific dust control management plan as part of the grading permit process to minimize potential impacts caused by blowing dust and sand during construction. Adherence to this standard requirement will assure that potential wind erosion impacts remain less than significant.

- c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.**

Subsidence

Subsidence is the settlement or deformation of the land surface that, in the Coachella Valley, is associated with long-term groundwater withdrawal. The subject property lies within an active subsidence area. However, the Project-specific geotechnical investigation noted that the site is several miles from the deepest section of documented subsidence, measured subsidence in the Project area has been low, and continued groundwater withdrawal is not expected to significantly affect the proposed Project due to onsite groundwater levels greater than 80 feet. With adherence to the site development recommendations provided in the geotechnical investigation (Petra, 2020) (see Mitigation Measure GEO-7), Project-related impacts associated with ground subsidence will be less than significant.

Landslide and Rockfall

See Response 7.a.iv, above.

Liquefaction and Dry Sand Settlement

See Response 7.a.iii, above.

Hydrocollapsible Soils

Hydrocollapsible soils are subject to collapse upon the introduction of water. The 2007 and 2020 on-site geological investigations determined there is a slight risk of hydrocollapsible soils on the subject property from local wetting or saturation due to landscape irrigation or pipe leakage. However, the possibility of hydrocollapse of the upper soil layers due to static groundwater is almost nil. Impacts will be less than significant.

CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area. Where a development project is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Sect. 4.5.7 (Grading/Land Development), “manufactured slopes associated with site development shall not extend into adjacent land in a conservation area.”



The Conservation Area is in the Santa Rosa Mountain foothills and slopes,  $\pm 200$  feet higher in elevation than the proposed development area. The Project does not propose manufactured slopes that would extend into the Conservation Area. Impacts to the Conservation Area will be less than significant.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** The 2007 and 2020 on-site geotechnical investigations determined that expansive soils are not present near the surface of the subject property. However, it is possible that expansive soils could be incorporated into imported fills. To minimize this potential, the geotechnical report (Petra, 2020) provides specifications about the expansion index and other characteristics of imported soils and requires the Project geotechnical consultant to verify that only non-expansive materials are imported (see Mitigation Measure GEO-3). Implementation of GEO-3 will reduce impacts to less than significant levels.
- e) **No Impact.** The subject property is in an urban area that is well-served by the sewer system, and the proposed Project will be connected to the sewer system. The Project will not result in new septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact will occur.
- f) **No Impact.** The low elevation portion of the subject property that will be developed consists of recently deposited aeolian and alluvial sediments that typically do not harbor paleontological resources. Neither they nor the higher elevation slopes are known to have unique paleontological or geologic features. No impact will occur.

#### **Mitigation:**

##### **GEO-1 Remedial Grading Requirements**

To limit the potential total and differential settlement to within the construction tolerances, near-surface site soils within the building construction locations and parking area shall be over-excavated to a minimum depth of at least 5 and 2 feet below the finished grades, respectively. The excavated material shall subsequently be moisture conditioned and replaced as engineered compacted fill as required to establish the planned finished grades.

##### **GEO-2 Suitability of Onsite Soils for Use in Engineered Fills**

Onsite soils are considered suitable for use in engineered fills provided they are free of organics or other deleterious materials. Small construction debris shall be removed by hand labor during grading operations, as necessary.

##### **GEO-3 Expansion and Corrosion Potential of Site Soils**

In the event that imported soil material is required to establish the planned finished grade elevations, potential import sources shall be evaluated by the Project geotechnical consultant prior to importing to the site to verify that only non-expansive and non-corrosive soil materials are used. A final assessment of soil expansion potential and corrosivity shall be performed at the completion of grading.

##### **GEO-4 Static and Dynamic Settlement Potential**

The Project shall be engineered to anticipate a total static settlement of approximately 1 inch, and a differential settlement of approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch over a distance of 30 feet; and an estimated 2.4 inches of seismically-induced (dynamic) total settlement after remedial grading, with a corresponding differential settlement of approximately 1.2 inches or less over a distance of 30 feet.



#### **GEO-5 Rockfall Barriers**

Rockfall barriers (gabion baskets) shall be constructed along the talus slopes to prevent rockfall rollout into areas to be developed, in accordance with the recommendations provided in the site-specific 2020 Updated Geotechnical Recommendations Report (Petra Geosciences). Alternatively, as described in the same report, fencing may be constructed along the southern side of the planned developed area to catch any falling rock, according to the parameters provided in the report.

**Responsible Party:** Project engineer, Developer, Contractor

**Timeline:** during Project development

#### **GEO-6 Removal of Loose Rock and Boulders**

The slopes above the subject property shall be scaled to remove loose rock and boulders from the face of the exposed bedrock slopes, as recommended in the site-specific 2020 Updated Geotechnical Recommendations Report (Petra Geosciences).

#### **GEO-7 Adherence to Geotechnical Investigation Guidelines and Recommendations**

The Project shall follow and incorporate all conclusions and recommendations provided in the 2020 Updated Geotechnical Recommendations Report (Petra Geosciences) pertaining to all aspects of Project development, including but not limited to site clearing, ground preparation, excavation, protection of adjacent properties, fill placement, testing during grading, volumetric changes, utility trenches, precise grading, site drainage, foundation design, seismic design, corrosivity, design and construction of hardscape, and pavement section design.

#### **Monitoring:**

**GEO-A** The City shall assure that all geotechnical recommendations are included in the project grading plans and improvement plans, as necessary. The Project geologist shall provide a final, project specific geotechnical analysis to the City with the grading plans for each phase of development.

**Responsible Party:** City Engineer

**Timeline:** Prior to issuance of grading permit.



8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan, 2017; SCAQMD AQMP, 2016. Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> SIP, 2003; California Air Resource Board, website, <http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/ccms/ccms.htm>; Rancho Mirage Sustainability Plan, March 2013.

### Background:

Greenhouse gases (GHG), including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and fluorinated gases (hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride), are released into the atmosphere through natural processes and human activities. These gases are called “greenhouse gases” due to their shared characteristic of trapping heat, and they are believed to be responsible for the global average increase in surface temperatures of 0.7-1.5°F that were observed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The quantity of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased significantly over a relatively short period. Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that has raised the most concern of atmospheric scientists due to current atmospheric levels and current and projected emission levels. Sources of GHGs include burning of fossil fuels, emission of volatile gases including and especially natural gas, and other chemical compounds.

- a, b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Project construction will result in temporary, short-term GHG emissions primarily associated with the operation of heavy equipment and vehicles. Long-term operation of the Project will generate GHG emissions from area, energy, mobile, waste, and water sources.

The California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2016.3.2 was used to estimate GHG emissions generated by the Project. CalEEMod input data and output tables are provided in Appendix A of this Initial Study. The analysis assumes a buildout year of 2022. The results are summarized in Table 6, below. To determine if total emissions will result in a cumulatively considerable impact, construction emissions were amortized over a 30-year period and added to annual operational emissions.

Construction emissions are projected as follows: 629 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2021 and 411.5 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022, for a total of 1,040.5 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e over the estimated two-year construction period. Amortized over 30 years, construction emissions are projected to be 35 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/year (rounded up from 34.7). Operational emissions are projected to be 3,621.5 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/year, with mobile (vehicle) source emissions representing 75% of all operational emissions. The combined total of (amortized) construction and operational emissions is projected to be 3,656.5 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/year.



**Table 6**  
**Operational and Amortized Construction GHG Emissions**  
**(Metric Tons/Year)**

	<b>CO<sub>2</sub>e</b>
Area Emissions	0.0
Energy Emissions	595.5
Mobile Emissions	2,733.5
Waste Emissions	162.0
Water Emissions	130.5
Amortized Construction Emissions	35.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,656.5</b>

Source: CalEEMod Version 2016.3.2. See Appendix A for detailed output tables. Numbers have been rounded up to the nearest whole number.

On December 5, 2008, the SCAQMD formally adopted a greenhouse gas significance threshold of 10,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/year that only applies to stationary sources (industrial uses) where SCAQMD is the lead agency (SCAQMD Resolution No. 08-35). This threshold was adopted based upon an October 2008 staff report and draft interim guidance document<sup>5</sup> that also recommended a threshold for all projects using a tiered approach. It was recommended by SCAQMD staff that a project's greenhouse gas emissions would be considered significant if it could not comply with at least one of the following "tiered" tests:

**Tier 1:** Is there an applicable exemption?

**Tier 2:** Is the project compliant with a greenhouse gas reduction plan that is, at a minimum, consistent with the goals of AB 32?

**Tier 3:** Is the project below an absolute threshold (10,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr for industrial projects and 3,000 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/yr for non-industrial projects)? A project's construction emissions are averaged over 30 years and are added to the project's operational emissions.

**Tier 4:** Is the project below a (yet to be set) performance threshold?

**Tier 5:** Would the project achieve a screening level with off-site mitigation?

The Project complies with the above-described Tier 2 criteria. The City of Rancho Mirage adopted a Sustainability Plan (2013) that establishes energy-efficiency reduction policies and implementation measures for development projects that are generally more stringent than building codes. The City has determined that the measures will effectively reduce city-wide GHG emissions at the project level. All Project components, including equipment, fuels, materials, and best management practices (BMPs), would be subject to current and future City and SCAQMD rules and regulations related to GHGs. Applicable SCAQMD rules include, but are not limited to, specific standards that reduce the greenhouse gas content in engines and limit equipment idling times. With adherence to the Sustainability Plan and other applicable GHG policies and regulations, Project-related GHG impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**Monitoring:** None required.

<sup>5</sup> Draft Guidance Document – Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Thresholds, South Coast Air Quality Management District, October 2008.



9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; California Department of Toxic Substances Control “EnviroStor” Database, accessed December 2020.

### Background:

A hazardous material is any substance that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical properties, may pose a hazard to human health and the environment. Under Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the term “hazardous substance” refers to both hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. Both are classified according to four properties: 1) ignitability, 2) corrosivity, 3) reactivity, and 4) toxicity.

A hazardous material is defined as a substance or combination of substances which may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible or incapacitating reversible illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed.

- a, b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is not known to contain hazardous materials, although autos parked in the northwest portion of the site contain relatively small quantities of fuel and oil. Construction of the proposed Project will involve the temporary use of heavy equipment that could require minor maintenance and/or re-fueling onsite and could result in fuel and oil spills if not properly managed. Contractors will be required to identify staging areas for storing materials and equipment and implement best management practices to assure that potential impacts are minimized and any minor spills are immediately and properly remediated. The Project will result in the long-term operation of several auto





dealerships and service centers that will involve the routine delivery, use, and storage of potentially hazardous materials, such as petroleum products, oils and lubricants, brake and transmission fluids, cleaning chemicals, and solvents. However, the Project would be required to handle and dispose of these substances in accordance with standard safety protocols and would be subject to inspections and oversight by the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health that monitors hazardous materials and wastes in the County. Risks associated with accidental release or upset will be less than significant.

#### CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area. Where a development project is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Section 4.5.2 (Toxics), "land uses proposed adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that use chemicals or generates bioproducts, such as manure, that are potentially toxic or may adversely affect wildlife and plant species, habitat, or water quality, it shall incorporate measures to ensure the application of such chemicals does not result in any discharge to the adjacent Conservation Area."

The Project will not generate bioproducts, such as manure. As explained above, it will use and store petroleum products and other potentially toxic substances. However, all materials will be located in the developed area on the valley floor, and none are proposed in proximity to the Conservation Area. All materials will be transported, stored, used, and disposed of in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Impacts to the Conservation Area will be less than significant.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The nearest school to the subject property is Rancho Mirage Elementary School on Indian Trail approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile to the southeast. As described in responses 9.a and 9.b above, impacts associated with hazardous materials onsite are expected to be less than significant. Therefore, impacts to schools will be less than significant.
- d) **No Impact.** According to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control "EnviroStor" Database, the subject property is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, the proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. No impact will occur.
- e) **No Impact.** The subject property is not located in an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public or private airstrip. The site is  $6\pm$  miles from the Palm Springs International Airport and  $8\pm$  miles from the Bermuda Dunes Airport. Therefore, the Project will not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people in the vicinity. No impact will occur.
- f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The City of Rancho Mirage has a Multi-Hazard Functional Plan, originally adopted in 1994, which is continually updated. The two main evacuation routes in the City include I-10 and Highway 111, with primary and minor arterial streets serving as secondary routes. Since earthquakes, floods, fires, or other disasters may render certain routes impassible, specific evacuation routes are not identified in the plan because they can change depending upon the type of emergency.

During construction, the Project may require temporary traffic lane closures, detours, or re-routing on Highway 111. However, any necessary Construction Traffic Control Plans would be coordinated with the City's Public Works Department to ensure traffic safety and preservation of emergency/secondary access during all development activities. The Project will have a less than significant impact on the adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan.



- g) **Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the Rancho Mirage General Plan (Exhibit 27), the subject property is not in a wildfire hazard zone. It is sparsely vegetated with sandy soils and provides no fire fuel source. The steep slopes immediately south of the subject property are designated as having a moderate to high fire threat; however, the historical record indicates that the wildland fire hazard in Rancho Mirage is relatively low because most of the rugged terrain is so steep, rocky, and dry that few plants thrive in the area and the amount of fuel available for wildland fires is very limited.

The Project would build new occupiable buildings and improvements in proximity to the slopes but will not exacerbate the wildfire risks on the site or surrounding lands, or create a significant exposure threat of pollutant concentrations from a wildfire. The Project would not increase exposure of people or structures to significant fire or fire-related risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Development will occur on the valley floor, and the slopes will remain undeveloped. The Project will be required to adhere to applicable fire codes and would be subject to Fire Department review and inspection. Impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** City of Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; "Preliminary Hydrology Report for Innovative Automotive Jessup Dealership, APN No. 684-190-007," Christiansen & Company, November 2020; FEMA FIRM map #06065C2206G, effective August 28, 2008; Commercial and Institutional End Uses of Water," AWWA Research Foundation and the American Water Works Association, 2000, Table A.1.

### Background:

The Coachella Valley climate is characterized as "subtropical desert." Annual rainfall is very low, ranging from 2 to 4 inches per year on the valley floor and averaging 5 to 6 inches in the foothills. In some years, no measurable rainfall has been reported on portions of the valley floor. Most rainfall occurs during the cooler months of November through March, but occasional high-intensity thunderstorms and tropical storms occur in late summer and early fall. Although the ground may be generally dry at the beginning of a storm, sufficient amounts and intensities of rainfall can saturate the surface, substantially reducing percolation and increasing runoff. Summer storms pose a greater threat of localized flooding than winter storms because of their high intensity and short duration. Monsoons and warm winter storms with snowmelt can generate significant runoff over a much larger area.

The subject property does not contain any stormwater conveyance facilities. It is adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel that conveys drainage from the Santa Rosa Mountains to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel. A Project-specific hydrology report was prepared by Christiansen & Company in November 2020 to evaluate proposed hydrology improvements.



- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will result in new grading, paving, construction, landscaping, and other elements of development on the subject property. It will result in the construction of onsite drainage improvements, including a channel, detention basin, curbs/gutters, and underground stormwater retention system. City and Regional Water Quality Control Board review would ensure that construction and operational best management practices (BMPs) satisfy local, state, and federal standards. In addition, the City would require preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in conformance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) prior to the issuance of grading permits. The Project will be required to connect to the existing CVWD sewer system in compliance with applicable standards that minimize impacts to regional groundwater quality. Impacts will be less than significant.

#### CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area of the CVMSHCP. Where a development project is within or adjacent to a CVMSHCP Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Section 4.5.1 (Drainage), the Project is required to “incorporate plans to ensure the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent conservation area is not altered in an adverse way compared to existing conditions. Stormwater systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystems processes within the adjacent conservation area.”

The Conservation Area is in the Santa Rosa Mountains and foothills,  $\pm 200$  ft. higher in elevation than the proposed development area. The Phase 1 hydrology plan directs all onsite flows toward the northeast and Highway 111, in the opposite direction from the Conservation Area. No Project-related runoff will be discharged to the Conservation Area, and the SWPPP and BMPs will further assure that water quality impacts to the Conservation Area will be less than significant.

Phase 2 of the Project will be subject to the same standards and requirements as Phase 1, including the preparation of a hydrology study, and the development of a WQMP and SWPPP. It is further expected that like Phase 1, drainage will be directed toward Highway 111. As a result, impacts associated with Phase 2 are also expected to be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Regional domestic water is supplied by groundwater supplemented with imported water and, to a lesser extent, recycled water. CVWD’s most recent Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) indicates that sufficient water supplies are available to serve anticipated future growth. Water consumed during Project construction will include water sprayed on the ground surface and construction equipment for dust control purposes, which would be limited and temporary. Post-development water will be consumed by drought-tolerant landscaping, water-efficient fixtures and appliances, car wash stations, and service centers. As new construction, the Project will be required to comply with Title 24 provisions that limit water demand.

According to CVWD’s UWMP, annual gross water use in CVWD’s service area was 92,974 acre-feet in 2015.<sup>6</sup> As shown in Table 7, full buildout of the Project has a potential to generate a demand for approximately 12.81 acre-feet per year. This represents 0.01% of CVWD’s annual gross water use. The Project will not substantially deplete local groundwater supplies or have a significant impact on groundwater supplies or recharge. Impacts will be less than significant.

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<sup>6</sup> “2015 Urban Water Management Plan, Final Report,” CVWD, July 1, 2016, Tables 4-1 and 5-2.



**Table 7**  
**Estimated Water Demand at Project Buildout**

<b>Proposed Land Use</b>	<b>No. of Employees<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Water Consumption Factor<sup>2</sup> (gal/employee/day)</b>	<b>Water Demand (gal/day)</b>	<b>Total Water Demand at Buildout (AFY)</b>
Auto dealership	240	34	8,160	9.14
Service center	80	41	3,280	3.67
<b>Total:</b>				12.81
<sup>1</sup> Assumes 75% of employees work in dealerships, and 25% work in service centers. Total employees = 320. <sup>2</sup> Water consumption factors for "New and Used Car Dealers" (SIC Code 551) and "Automotive Repair Shops" (SIC Code 753), provided in "Commercial and Institutional End Uses of Water," AWWA Research Foundation and the American Water Works Association, 2000, Table A.1.				

- c) i. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will result in grading, excavation, paving, and other modifications of the ground surface. However, it will not alter the existing drainage patterns in a manner that would cause substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site. As demonstrated in the Phase 1 hydrology report, off-site flows from the hillsides will be contained and directed to the existing catch basin in Highway 111, and 100% of onsite (Project-generated) flows will be retained onsite in an earthen retention basin and underground stormwater retention basin. After construction is complete, onsite soils will be covered or stabilized by new buildings, landscaping, and paved surfaces, further reducing potential erosion. Phase 1 impacts will be less than significant.

Phase 2 of the Project will be subject to the same standards and requirements as Phase 1, including the preparation of a hydrology study, and the development of a WQMP and SWPPP. It is further expected that like Phase 1, landscaping will cover permeable areas to control erosion. As a result, impacts associated with Phase 2 are also expected to be less than significant.

- ii. **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will increase the amount and rate of water generated onsite resulting from water usage and installation of new impervious surfaces, including parking lots and driveways. The Phase 1 hydrology plan has been designed to accommodate both off-site (hillside) and onsite (Project-generated) flows. Off-site (hillside) flows will be accommodated by a proposed 3-ft. wide concrete U-shaped channel that will run roughly southwest to northeast, empty into a proposed detention basin, and overflow into an existing catch basin located on the central driveway near its intersection with Highway 111. The Project-specific hydrology report evaluated these improvements using the Riverside County Flood Control and Conservation District Modified Synthetic Unit Hydrograph (MSUH) and determined they are appropriately sized to handle 100% of the 100-year storm event from off-site sources. Onsite (Project-generated) flows will be contained by a series of 3-ft. gutters, 6-in. curb and gutter, 2'x 3' inlet basin, and 12-inch perforated pipes that convey flows to an underground stormwater retention system. A temporary earthen retention basin with a capacity of 5,006 cubic ft. and 3:1 side slopes is planned for retention of the easterly half of the central driveway; it will be removed once development of Phase 2 is underway. The hydrology report determined that these improvements will adequately contain 100% of the 100-year storm event, as required by the City. No ponding is anticipated. With these improvements in place, no off- or onsite flooding is anticipated in Phase 1, and impacts will be less than significant.

Phase 2 of the Project will be subject to the same standards and requirements as Phase 1, including the preparation of a hydrology study, and the development of a WQMP and SWPPP. Phase 2 will, like Phase 1, be required to contain the 100 year storm on-site, and to manage off-site flows through the site. These standards and requirements will assure that flooding will not occur on-site. As a result, impacts associated with Phase 2 are also expected to be less than significant.



- iii. **Less Than Significant Impact.** See Response 10.c.ii, above. The Project will increase stormwater runoff. However, the hydrology report for Phase 1 determined that proposed stormwater improvements will adequately accommodate 100-year storm flows generated off-site (hillsides) and onsite (Project). Increased runoff will not exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff. Impacts will be less than significant.

To protect stormwater from potential pollution, both phases of the Project will be required to comply with the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Best Management Practices (BMPs), and ensure proper storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials onsite in compliance with applicable regulations, including those of the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health. Impacts associated with polluted runoff will be less than significant.

- iv. **Less Than Significant Impact.** Most of the subject property is designated Zone X, an “area of minimal flood hazard” on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The easterly property boundary is adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel which conveys runoff from the mountains to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel and is separated from the subject property by chain link fencing. The storm channel is designated Zone A “special flood hazard area,” and a  $\pm 75$ -foot wide stretch of land along its westerly banks (along the easterly edge of the subject property) is designated “Zone X: 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with depths less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile.”

As discussed in Response 10.c.ii, above, the Project will result in grading, excavation, construction, and other ground surface modifications on the westerly portion of the subject property. The Phase 1 hydrology report determined that proposed stormwater management improvements will sufficiently accommodate 100-year storm events from off-site (hillside) and onsite (Project) sources. Impacts will be less than significant.

Phase 2 will occur on the easterly side of the subject property adjacent to the channel, and the easterly portion of it is within Zone X: 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with depths less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile. Phase 2 will be required to manage off-site (hillside) and onsite (Project-generated) flood flows. Phase 2 will be required to accommodate the Zone X flows and demonstrate to the City that they are conveyed adequately to City standards. As a result of implementation of City standards and requirements, impacts associated with redirection of flood flows will be less than significant.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is located inland, well outside of any tsunami zones. The site is not subject to seiche, as the nearest above-ground water storage reservoirs are more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile west and 1 mile southeast and separated by mountain slopes, ridges, and intervening development. As discussed in Response 10.c.iv, above, the easterly portion of the subject property is adjacent to the West Magnesia Storm Channel and susceptible to low-depth flooding in rare storm events.

The hydrology report demonstrated that proposed hydrology improvements in Phase 1 will adequately manage onsite and off-site flows. Therefore, there is no risk of inundation that could result in the release of pollutants from Phase 1. The easterly portion of Phase 2 is within flood Zone X, a designation that indicates a low likelihood of flooding. Proposed auto dealerships and service centers are expected to handle, store, and use potentially polluting products onsite, such as petroleum products, oils and lubricants, cleaning products, and solvents. However, their use, storage and transport is highly regulated and the risk of flooding resulting in the release of any pollutants would be less than significant because the Project would be required to transport, use, and store such materials according to applicable regulations and protocols, and





subject to oversight by the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health. Impacts would be less than significant.

- e) **No Impact.** The Project will be required to conform to applicable water quality regulations and plans, including Water Quality Management Plans. It will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. No impact will occur.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**Monitoring:** None required.



11. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; Rancho Mirage Municipal Code; Highway 111 East Specific Plan, 2014.

**Background:**

Highway 111, along which the subject property is located, is the principal commercial corridor through the City and Coachella Valley. It is largely developed with neighborhood and regional commercial retail, restaurant, and service uses, as well as institutional buildings, including the Rancho Mirage Library/Observatory and City Hall. Residential development in subdivisions, multi-family complexes, gated neighborhoods, and country clubs extends beyond the corridor.

- a) **No Impact.** The Project will not physically divide an established community. It is currently vacant and surrounded by Highway 111 on the north, open space and mountain foothills on the south, the West Magnesia Storm Channel on the east, and open space and a veterinarian office on the west. It is not within or adjacent to a residential neighborhood and does not contain streets, paths, trails, or other community connectors that would be divided by the Project. No impact will occur.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is designated Neighborhood Commercial (C-N) and Hillside Reserve (H-R) in the General Plan and is within District 10 of the Highway 111 East Specific Plan. New automobile sale uses are already established within the boundaries of the Highway 111 East Specific Plan. This Project is a logical expansion of an existing use that is prominent along the Highway 111 corridor. The Project is consistent with General Plan and Highway 111 East Specific Plan goals and policies that pursue high-quality retail uses along Highway 111. Impacts will be less than significant.

CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area. Where a development project is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Sect. 4.5.6 (Barriers), "Land uses adjacent to or within a Conservation Area shall incorporate barriers in individual project designs to minimize unauthorized public access, domestic animal predation, illegal trespass, or dumping in a Conservation Area. Such barriers may include native landscaping, rocks/boulders, fencing, walls and/or signage." For the proposed Project, this requirement is already satisfied by the existing bighorn sheep fence along the southern property boundary. No additional barrier is required, and no impact will occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



12. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; Update of Mineral Land Classification Map for Portland Cement Concrete-Grade Aggregate in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region, Riverside County, California (Special Report 198), California Geological Survey, 2007.

**Background:**

In the Coachella Valley, mineral resources are largely limited to aggregates, such as sand, gravel, and crushed stone. These are major components of concrete, plaster, stucco, road base and fill, which are essential to the construction industry. Important regional deposits of these materials are being actively developed. Other mineral deposits in the region are generally limited to rocky outcroppings within the Little San Bernardino and Santa Rosa Mountains and have not been mined. There are currently no mines or extraction sites in Rancho Mirage.

- a,b) **No Impact.** The subject property is located within Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) 3, defined as “areas containing known or inferred mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance.” The subject property is not designated, used, or planned for mineral resource extraction or development. The proposed Project would have no impact on mineral resources.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



13. NOISE -- Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; “Rancho Mirage Highway 111 Dealerships, Noise Impact Analysis,” Urban Crossroads, December 22, 2020.

#### Background:

The noise environment in the City and Coachella Valley is typical of a suburban community, with primary noise sources generally including traffic on Interstate-10 and major arterials, mechanical equipment such as heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) units, commercial loading and unloading operations, and parking lot activity.

In December 2020, a Project-specific noise study was prepared by Urban Crossroads to evaluate potential Project-related noise impacts and the need for mitigation.

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The primary noise source impacting the subject property is traffic on Highway 111. The site is otherwise relatively quiet, as it is surrounded by open space on the south and southwest and the West Magnesia Storm Channel on the east, neither of which generates noise. The nearest sensitive receptors are: 1) Rancho Mirage Public Library 220± feet to the northeast, 2) residential units 365± feet to the southeast on Sahara Road, 3) residential units at San Jacinto Villas 350± feet to the northeast on San Jacinto Drive, and 4) residential units at Thunderbird Palms, 580± feet to the northwest on Paxton Drive. The Project-specific noise study measured existing noise levels at these “receiver locations,” as well as the veterinarian office immediately northwest of the subject property.

#### Construction Noise

Project construction will result in localized, temporary increases in ambient noise levels from heavy trucks, equipment, and machinery. According to the Project noise study, a construction-related daytime noise level threshold of 80 dBA  $L_{eq}$  is a reasonable threshold to assess daytime construction noise level impacts. The Project’s highest construction noise levels are expected to range from 57.1 to 72.3 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the five receiver locations, which are within the significance threshold. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.



Additionally, the City recognizes that construction noise is difficult to control and restricts allowable hours. Section 8.45.050 of the Municipal Code exempts construction generated noise if a building permit from the City has been issued and construction occurs between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., with no activity on Sundays and holidays. These restrictions and standard muffling of construction equipment will further reduce construction noise impacts on surrounding land uses. Impacts will be temporary and will end once construction is complete.

#### Operational Noise

Long-term operation of the Project will result in permanent increases in ambient noise levels. Noise sources are expected to include mechanical equipment such as rooftop air conditioning units, service shop equipment and tools, parking lot activity, and Project-generated traffic. The proposed land use is consistent with the existing Highway 111 urban commercial environment, and noise sources are expected to be similar to those already in place along the corridor. Auto repair and maintenance will take place inside the enclosed Service Center planned at the rear (southwestern portion) of the property close to foothills/slopes and open space, which will minimize noise impacts to surrounding properties.

#### *Operational Noise (service shop activity, rooftop air conditioning units, parking lot activity):*

The City regulates noise-generating activities through Municipal Code Section 8.45.030. For parcels designated Neighborhood Commercial (C-N), it requires that exterior daytime noise levels be 70 dBA  $L_{eq}$  or less, evening levels be 65 dBA  $L_{eq}$  or less, and nighttime levels be 60 dBA  $L_{eq}$  or less. The Project noise study determined that, at buildout, at the five receiver locations, Project operations will result in noise levels ranging from 44.0 to 54.4 dBA  $L_{eq}$  during daytime hours, 40.2 to 50.9 dBA  $L_{eq}$  during evening hours, and 35.8 to 47.6 dBA  $L_{eq}$  during nighttime hours, all of which satisfy the City's exterior noise level standards. Overall, compared to the existing ambient noise environment, the Project will result in an unmitigated operational noise level increase of 0.0 to 2.2 dBA  $L_{eq}$  at the receiver locations. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

#### *Traffic Noise:*

For noise-sensitive land uses, when the Without Project noise level is less than 60 dBA CNEL, a 5 dBA CNEL noise increase is considered a significant impact. When the Without Project noise level ranges from 60 to 65 dBA CNEL, a 3 dBA CNEL noise level increase is considered significant. When the Without Project noise levels already exceeds 65 dBA CNEL, an increase of 1.5 dBA CNEL or greater is considered significant. For non-noise-sensitive land uses, when the Without Project noise levels are below 70 dBA CNEL, a 5 dBA CNEL or greater noise level increase is considered a significant impact. When the Without Project noise levels are greater than 70 dBA CNEL, a 3 dBA CNEL or greater noise level increase is considered a significant impact since the noise level criteria is already exceeded.

The Traffic study analyzed existing and future noise contours along eight (8) road segments in the Project vicinity. Five (5) of the segments include noise-sensitive (residential) land uses, and three (3) include non-noise sensitive land uses. At buildout, during Horizon Year 2040, Project traffic is projected to increase noise levels by 0.0 to 0.7 dBA CNEL on the studied road segments compared to Without Project conditions, which is less than the significance thresholds for both noise-sensitive and non-noise-sensitive land uses. This will occur without any noise attenuation features, such as noise barriers or intervening topography. Impacts will be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

#### CVMSHCP Land Use Adjacency Guidelines

The southern boundary of the subject property is adjacent to the CVMSHCP Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area. Where a development project is within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, it is subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines to minimize the edge effects of development on the



Conservation Area. Per CVMSHCP Sect. 4.5.4 (Noise), “proposed development adjacent to or within a Conservation Area that generates noise in excess of 75 dBA  $L_{eq}$  hourly shall incorporate setbacks, berms, or walls, as appropriate, to minimize the effects of noise on the adjacent Conservation Area in accordance with the guidelines to be included in the Implementation Manual.” As explained above, when Project noise is combined with existing ambient noise during both construction and long-term operation, noise levels are not expected to exceed 75 dBA  $L_{eq}$ . Therefore, impacts to the Conservation Area will be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Municipal Code Section 17.18.080 states “no vibration associated with any use shall be allowed which is discernable beyond the boundary line of the subject property.” The Project noise study states that significant impacts would occur if the Project generates vibration levels greater than 78 VdB at receiving residential land uses and 84 VdB at receiving commercial land uses.

The Project will result in short-term groundborne vibration and noise during the construction phase from the use of heavy grading, hauling, and compacting equipment. However, no blasting of bedrock is proposed. The noise study determined that the Project’s highest vibration level at Receiver Location R1 (commercial land use) is projected to be 82.2 VdB, which is less than the significance threshold for commercial land uses. The Project’s highest vibration level at Receiver Locations 2 through 5 (residential, mixed use, and public/library land uses) is projected to be 58.7, which is below the significance threshold for residential land uses. Therefore, Project-related vibration impacts are considered less than significant. Impacts will be further reduced because they will occur during daytime hours, the least sensitive times of day, and are unlikely to be sustained during the entire construction period. Long-term Project operation will not result in excessive groundborne vibration or noise. Impacts will be less than significant.

- c) **No Impact.** The subject property is not located within two miles of any airport, private or public. It is approximately 6 miles from the Palm Springs International Airport and 8 miles from the Bermuda Dunes Airport. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required





<b>14. POPULATION AND HOUSING –</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, California Department of Finance, January 1, 2020; 2020 RTP/SCS, Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Southern California Association of Governments, adopted September 3, 2020.

#### **Background:**

The Rancho Mirage population increased 30% between 2000 and 2010, from 13,249 to 17,218. The latest (2020) population estimate is 19,114. SCAG projects the City's population will grow to 25,200 by 2045. In 2020, there were an estimated 14,788 housing units in Rancho Mirage. Local housing products include a mix of single- and multi-family units, and a smaller number of mobile homes.

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project does not propose residential development and, therefore, will not directly induce population growth. It will result in the relocation of two existing auto dealerships from Cathedral City to Rancho Mirage, and the addition of up to three new dealerships. Existing employees are not expected to relocate to the City as a result of the Project, and any potential attraction of new employees to the City will be minimal. The Project will not result in population growth that exceeds RTP/SCS forecasts. The subject property is already well-served by nearby roads and infrastructure. The Project will require parcel-level utility extensions and new driveways, but they will serve only the subject site and will not indirectly induce population growth in the area. Impacts will be less than significant.
- b) **No Impact.** The subject property is vacant. The Project would not require or result in the demolition of existing housing or displacement of people such that replacement housing would be required elsewhere. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



15. PUBLIC SERVICES –	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017.

#### Background:

Fire protection, first response, emergency medical services, and natural disaster preparedness services in the City are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD). The City is a member of the Cove Communities Services Commission, which includes the cities of Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, and Indian Wells. Police protection is provided on a service contract basis by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that operates out of the Palm Desert Station. Two school districts, Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD) and Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD), serve the City. One private school, the Palm Valley School, also provides K-12 education in the City.

#### a) **Less Than Significant Impact.**

##### Fire

Fire protection and emergency services in the City are provided by the Riverside County Fire Department, under City contract. Fire Station No. 1 is ½-mile west of the subject property on Highway 111. Access on Highway 111 may be temporarily affected during construction of the Project; however, the Project will be required to coordinate with the City to assure that construction traffic control plans minimize impacts to mobility and accessibility in the area. The Project will bring new structures and population to a currently vacant site, which will increase the demand for fire protection services. However, structures will be required to adhere to the most recent fire codes and will be subject to Fire Department review and inspections. Furthermore, the City will require, as a condition of approval, that the Project participate in its public safety CFD, which is designed to address the demands of new development on City services. The Project will not result in the need for new or physically altered fire facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.



#### Police

Police protection in the City is provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, under City contract. The nearest police station is ±3.5 miles northeast of the subject property on Gerald Ford Drive. Buildout of Project will increase the demand for police protection services. However, the Project will be subject to review by the Police Department and will not result in the need for new or physically altered police facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.

#### Schools

The Project does not propose residential development and, therefore, will not directly impact student enrollment. It will result in the relocation of existing auto dealerships and existing jobs from Cathedral City to Rancho Mirage, as well as the creation of new jobs for the additional dealerships to be built on the Project site. Existing employees are not expected to relocate to the City as a result of the Project, and any potential attraction of new employees to the City will be minimal. Both Cathedral City and this portion of Rancho Mirage are within the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD), and the Project is not expected to result in student enrollment changes that would adversely impact PSUSD. New Project-related growth will be limited, and no new or physically altered schools will be required. The Project will be required to pay mandated school impact fees, which will reduce potential impacts to schools. Impacts will be less than significant.

#### Parks

The City owns and maintains mini-parks, local parks, and community parks. The Project will result in the relocation of existing jobs from Cathedral City to Rancho Mirage and the creation of new jobs at the additional dealerships. It is expected to attract few new residents to the City. Population growth resulting from the Project could increase the demand for park and/or recreation facilities to a limited extent; however, it is not expected to result in the need for new or physically altered facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.

#### Other Public Facilities

Other public facilities in the Project area include the Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory, City Hall, and post office. As described above, job growth facilitated by the Project may increase the use of these and other public facilities in the City and broader Coachella Valley. However, potential growth will be limited and will not result in the need for new or physically altered facilities. Impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



16. RECREATION –	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017.

**Background:**

The City offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including golf courses, bikeways, and parkland. In addition, the City is near thousands of acres of National Park and National Monument lands, U.S. Forest Service wilderness lands, and state, regional and tribal parks that contain miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will result in the relocation of existing jobs from Cathedral City to Rancho Mirage, and additional jobs created by the new dealerships on the Project site. It is expected to attract few new residents to the City. Potential Project-related population growth will not result in increased usage of existing parks or recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. Impacts will be less than significant.
- b) **No Impact.** The Project does not include recreational facilities and will not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that could result in adverse physical effects on the environment. No impact will occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



17. TRANSPORTATION – Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; “Rancho Mirage Highway 111 Dealerships Traffic Analysis,” Urban Crossroads, December 19, 2020; “Rancho Mirage Highway 111 Dealerships VMT Screening,” Urban Crossroads, March 2, 2021; CVAG Active Transportation Plan, Michael Baker International, 2016.

### Background:

Regional connectivity in the City is provided by Highway 111 and arterials, including DaVall Drive, Bob Hope Drive, Country Club Drive, Frank Sinatra Drive, and Gerald Ford Drive. Highway 111 forms the northerly boundary of the subject property and accommodates local and regional traffic through one of the City’s principal commercial corridors and connects to other Coachella Valley communities, from Palm Springs on the west to the Salton Sea and Imperial County on the east.

A Project-specific traffic impact analysis was prepared by Urban Crossroads on December 19, 2020, and a VMT analysis was prepared on March 2, 2021.

#### a) **Less Than Significant Impact.**

##### LOS Policies

According to the Project traffic study, the Project is anticipated to generate a net total of 2,490 trip-ends per day with 194 AM peak hour trips and 262 PM peak hour trips. The Rancho Mirage General Plan requires a minimum Level-of-Service (LOS) standard of LOS D for roadway segment operations. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) adopted a minimum LOS threshold of LOS E for streets within the Congestion Management Program (CMP), including Highway 111.

##### *Intersection Analysis:*

The Project traffic impact analysis evaluated existing conditions and future Project-generated impacts at 18 intersections in the Project vicinity. All intersections are currently (2020) operating at an acceptable LOS (LOS D or better). Under the Existing Plus Ambient Growth Plus Project (EAP) scenario, which includes existing traffic plus ambient background traffic growth plus Project buildout (year 2022), all intersections are projected to operate at an acceptable LOS. Under the Existing Plus Ambient Growth Plus Project Plus Cumulative Projects (EAPC) scenario (2022), which adds traffic from reasonably foreseeable development projects in the vicinity that are either approved or being processed, all intersections are projected to operate at an acceptable LOS. Under the Horizon Year scenario (2040), which includes long-term future traffic conditions plus the Project, all study intersections are anticipated to operate at an acceptable LOS. Overall, the Project will increase traffic volumes and contribute to LOS declines at some study intersections, but all intersections will continue to operate at LOS D or better. The Project will not conflict with LOS policies. Impacts will be less than significant.



*Roadway Segment Analysis:*

The Project traffic study analyzed existing conditions and future Project-generated impacts on 8 roadway segments in the Project vicinity. All studied segments are currently (2020) operating at an acceptable LOS. Under the EAP (2022), EAPC (2022), and Horizon Year (2040) scenarios, all segments are projected to operate at an acceptable LOS. The Project will contribute to increased average daily traffic (ADT) volumes, but roadway segments are projected to continue to operate at LOS D or better. The Project will not conflict with LOS policies. Impacts will be less than significant.

Pedestrian Facilities

A sidewalk extends within the right-of-way on the south side of Highway 111, immediately adjacent to the subject property. The Project will have no impact on the sidewalk.

Bicycle Facilities

The CVAG Active Transportation Plan (2016) establishes goals and policies pertaining to implementation of its Bicycle Transportation Plan and completion of a feasible and fundable bikeway network. The Plan identifies an existing bike path along Highway 111 adjacent to the subject property. No bicycle facilities are proposed in the project vicinity. During construction, the Project may require temporary closure of Highway 111 traffic lanes that could impact bike travel, but adjustments will be coordinated with and approved by the City to ensure continued safety. Impacts will be less than significant.

Transit Facilities

SunLine Transit Agency provides bus transit services to the Coachella Valley, including the City of Rancho Mirage. Bus Route 1 (formerly Route 111) extends along the entire Highway 111 corridor from Palm Springs to Coachella, and a bus stop with a bus turnout lane is located on the south side of Highway 111 immediately adjacent to the subject property, between the westerly property boundary and the proposed central driveway. The bus stop will provide riders with direct access to the proposed Project. The Project will have no impact on the bus stop or bus operations. No impact will occur.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Under SB 743, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 was amended December 2018, stating that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. A lead agency may use models or other methods to analyze a project's VMT quantitatively or qualitatively. The City has adopted a VMT policy, as amended, for the analysis required under CEQA. An analysis based on the City's policy was conducted to determine the potential impacts associated with the proposed Project as it relates to the generation of VMT. As described in the analysis (please see Appendix F), the Project qualifies as a local retail serving project which adds retail opportunities in proximity to existing residential development, thereby reducing and shortening trips in the City. The analysis further found that the Project also qualifies under the screening criteria included in the City's policy, whose standards are intended to reduce the need for analysis when projects can be assumed to have a less than significant impact on VMT. In the case of the proposed Project, the City's screening criteria for Small Projects applies, insofar as all of the buildings within the Project are smaller than the maximum allowable building size of 60,000 square feet per building. The Project contains multiple small buildings, most of which are under 20,000 square feet, and the largest single building is proposed to be up to 50,000 square feet. As a result of the analysis, therefore, the Project is a Small Local Serving Retail project, and is considered to have a less than significant impact on vehicle miles traveled in the City.
- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric feature or incompatible uses. The Project will be accessed via three (3) proposed driveways connecting to Highway 111. Primary access will be taken from the central driveway extending from the existing signalized intersection at Highway 111 and Library Way south onto the Project site. Intersection geometrics, signalization, and signage will be modified, as needed, to safely accommodate a full range of





turning movements. The east and west driveways will connect to Highway 111 at the northeast and northwest corners of the subject property. Access at both locations will be restricted to right-in/right-out turning movements only. All modifications and improvements will be coordinated with and approved by the City to assure compliance with safety and operational standards and requirements. No hazardous features are proposed. The future vehicle mix accessing the site will be consistent with the existing mix already using local and regional roads. Impacts will be less than significant.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Construction and operational activities associated with the Project will not significantly impact the ability of emergency service providers to provide services to the area. Travel lanes on Highway 111 in the Project vicinity may be temporarily affected during construction. However, the Project will be required to coordinate with the City to develop construction traffic control plans that maintain safe and adequate traffic flow and assure that emergency access is not interrupted. Emergency access to the Project will be provided via Highway 111 and three new driveways (see response to 17.c, above). Driveway and parking lot dimensions and layouts will be reviewed by the Fire Department to assure they can accommodate fire and emergency response trucks and equipment. Impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

**Monitoring:** None required.



<b>18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES –</b> Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; “Update to Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey, Rancho Mirage Auto Dealership Project, Portion of APN 684-190-007, City of Rancho Mirage,” CRM Tech, November 5, 2020; “Historical/Archaeological Resources Survey Report, APNs 684-130-025 to -027, 684-190-001 and -002, City of Rancho Mirage,” CRM Tech, March 28, 2008; City of Rancho Mirage Historic Resources Survey, Leslie Heumann and Associates, February 3, 2003.

#### **Background:**

The Cahuilla Indians have inhabited the valley for centuries. They are a Takic-speaking people of hunters and gatherers generally and traditionally divided into three groups based on geographic setting: the Pass Cahuilla of the San Geronio Pass – Palm Springs area; the Mountain Cahuilla of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains and the Cahuilla Valley; and the Desert Cahuilla of the eastern Coachella Valley. Today, Native Americans of Pass or Desert Cahuilla heritage are mainly affiliated with the Indian tribes of the Coachella Valley, including the Cabazon, Augustine, Torres Martinez, Twenty-nine Palms, Agua Caliente, and Morongo.

In 2008, a historical/archaeological resources survey report was prepared by CRM Tech for a previous development proposal on the subject property. An update to the 2008 report was prepared by CRM Tech on November 5, 2020.

18.i,ii) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** Although the subject property is not on tribal land, it is within the traditional use area of the Cahuilla and has the potential to harbor tribal cultural resources. It is adjacent to and partially within the foothills and slopes of the Santa Rosa Mountains that were used by the Cahuilla for food, fiber, water (streams), and cooler conditions compared to the desert floor. The Project will result in site preparation, grading, and other ground surface disturbances that could unearth previously unknown cultural resources.

#### AB 52 Tribal Consultation

Consistent with AB 52, the City initiated tribal consultation on February 12, 2021 with the appropriate tribes, notifying them of the proposed Project. The table below summarizes the tribes contacted and responses received.



**Table 8**  
**AB 52 Consultation Summary**

<b>Tribe Contacted</b>	<b>Tribal Response Received</b>
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (ACBCI)	Yes
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	No
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians	No
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians	Yes
Cahuilla Band of Indians	No
Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians	No
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians	No
Ramona Band of Cahuilla	No
Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians	No
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	No
Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	No

The ACBCI requested consultation, which is under way. The Augustine Band declined consultation. The ACBCI requested monitoring of earth moving activities, which is included in Mitigation Measure CUL-1. When consultation is completed, and prior to the adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project, mitigation measures will be modified and/or conditions of approval included to address ACBCI's concerns.

#### Archaeological Resources

As explained in response 5.b, above, the 2008 cultural resources survey and 2020 update conducted on the subject property identified two (2) previously recorded archaeological sites within or just outside the subject site:

1. A 75-meter possible aboriginal trail segment in the southeasterly portion of the subject property, near the West Magnesia Storm Channel and recorded in 1978. During the 2008 field survey, no other archaeological features or artifacts were found in the trail vicinity and it demonstrated no prehistoric or historic characteristics. The remnants of the site were determined not to meet CEQA's definition of a "historical resource." During the November 2020 field survey, the trail segment was observed south of the PBS sheep fence, and no portion of it was found within the current Project boundaries.
2. Two rock features observed in the same vicinity as the above-described trail segment. They were recorded in 1978 but not found during the 2008 field reconnaissance.

The City has not determined that these resources are significant pursuant to the Public Resources Code.

#### Summary

No known cultural resources have been identified onsite. However, the subject property is in a culturally sensitive area, and the potential exists for previously unknown resources to be discovered during Project development. The ACBCI have requested the presence of a Tribal monitor during earth moving activities. Implementation of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 (see Section 5, Cultural Resources), will reduce potential impacts to tribal cultural resources to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation:** See Section 5, Cultural Resources

**Monitoring:** See Section 5, Cultural Resources



19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; 2015 Urban Water Management Plan (Final Report), CVWD, July 1, 2016; Sanitary Sewer Management Plan, CVWD, December 1, 2019; <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates>, accessed February 2021; Solid Waste Information System, [www2.calrecycle.ca.gov](http://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov), CalRecycle, accessed December 2020.

#### Background:

The Project area is served by the following utility providers:

Utility	Service Provider(s)
Electricity	Rancho Mirage Energy Authority, South California Edison (SCE)
Natural gas	Southern California Gas
Water	Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)
Wastewater	Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)
Solid waste	Burrtec
Telecommunications	Spectrum, Frontier, Hughes Net

- a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project vicinity has been largely developed for many decades and is well-served by utility providers and infrastructure. The Project will require parcel-scale extensions of utility infrastructure, such as water and sewer laterals. Large-scale water and sewer trunk lines and energy transmission lines are already in place along the Highway 111 corridor; therefore, the construction of new and/or expanded extensions is not expected to cause significant environmental effects. The Project will



require construction of new onsite stormwater management infrastructure (see response 10.c.ii); however, it will be required to comply with applicable engineering standards, subject to review and approval by the City, and it is not expected to cause significant environmental effects. Impacts will be less than significant.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will increase the demand for domestic water supplies in Rancho Mirage. Water will be consumed in the Project's restrooms, sinks, service bays, car wash area, and landscape irrigation, as well as watering of ground surfaces and equipment during the construction phase. Water savings will be realized, to some extent, by low-flow plumbing fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping materials, and implementation of water-conserving landscaping irrigation measures. As shown in Table 7 of this Initial Study, the Project is estimated to generate a water demand of 12.81 acre-feet per year.

Domestic water is provided by the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), which utilizes wells and elevated storage reservoirs to source and provide pressure to its customer service network. In 2015, CVWD's actual water supplies totaled 101,723 acre-feet from groundwater and recycled water.<sup>7</sup> CVWD has existing water entitlements, rights, and contracts to meet future demand as needed over time and has committed sufficient capital resources and planned investments in various water programs and facilities to serve existing and future customers. The 2040 projected retail water supply is 230,600 acre-feet.<sup>8</sup> CVWD's UWMP analyzed projected available water supply and demand through 2040 under three scenarios: average water year, single dry year, and multiple dry years. It concluded that its urban water supply reliability is 100% under each scenario. Therefore, CVWD will have sufficient water available to serve the Project and reasonably foreseeable development. Project-related impacts will be less than significant.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will increase the demand for wastewater treatment services. Wastewater is collected by CVWD collector facilities and conveyed to trunk sewers to Water Reclamation Plant 10 (WRP-10) in Palm Desert for treatment. WRP-10 treats domestic wastewater from four cities (Palm Desert, Indian Wells, Rancho Mirage, and portions of Cathedral City) and serves a population of approximately 90,000 people. It has a secondary treatment capacity of 18 million gallons per day (mgd) and currently treats an average daily flow of approximately 9 mgd. WRP-10 also has a tertiary treatment capacity of 15 mgd, and tertiary treated water is used for golf course and landscape irrigation. Therefore, WRP-10 has sufficient available capacity to manage increased demand for wastewater conveyance and treatment. Project-related impacts will be less than significant.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project will generate solid waste and increase the demand for solid waste collection and disposal services. Solid waste materials are likely to include construction materials, paper and office materials, and auto products and parts, among other items. Disposal of hazardous materials will be subject to applicable regulations and monitoring by the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (see Section 9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials). The Project is projected to generate 210.24 tons of solid waste per year, as shown below. Waste recycling and diversion, in accordance with State and City regulations, will reduce quantities further.

<sup>7</sup> "2015 Urban Water Management Plan, Final Report," Coachella Valley Water District, July 1, 2016, Table 6-11.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Table 6-12.



**Table 9**  
**Estimated Solid Waste Disposal at Project Buildout**

<b>Proposed Land Use</b>	<b>Disposal Rate</b>	<b>Proposed Square Feet</b>	<b>Projected Solid Waste Disposal (lbs/day)</b>	<b>Projected Solid Waste Disposal (tons/year)</b>
Auto dealer and service station	0.9 lb/100 sf/day	128,000	1,152	210.24
* Estimated Solid Waste Generation Rates by Calrecycle, <a href="https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates">https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/WasteCharacterization/General/Rates</a> , accessed February 2021.				

The City contracts with Burrtec for solid waste collection and disposal services. Solid waste generated in the City is taken to the Lamb Canyon Landfill in Beaumont or, alternatively, the Badlands Landfill in Moreno Valley. Both are operated by the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources. The Lamb Canyon Landfill has a maximum permit capacity of 38.9 million cubic yards and a (2015) remaining capacity of 19.2 million cubic yards.<sup>9</sup> Badlands Landfill has a maximum permit capacity of 34.4 million cubic yards and a (2015) remaining capacity of 15.7 million cubic yards. Therefore, adequate landfill capacity is available to serve the Project. Impacts will be less than significant.

- e) **No Impact.** The City, Riverside County, and Burrtec operate in compliance with federal, state, and local statutes regulating solid waste. The Project will not conflict with federal, state, and local statutes regulating the disposal of solid waste. No impact will occur.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required

<sup>9</sup> Solid Waste Information System (SWIS), [www2.calrecycle.ca.gov](http://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov), CalRecycle, accessed December 2020.





20. WILDFIRE – If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Sources:** Rancho Mirage General Plan 2017; Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Local Responsibility Areas, CalFire, 2009; Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas, CalFire, 2007.

#### Background:

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) ranks fire hazards of wildland areas in the state using four main criteria: fuels, weather, assets at risk, and level of service. Although Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are mapped in the Santa Rosa Mountains near Rancho Mirage, the wildland fire hazard in the City and Coachella Valley is relatively low.

- a-d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The subject property is not located within a fire zone classified as either a state responsibility area or a very high fire hazard severity zone. The nearest Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are in the Santa Rosa Mountains approximately one mile west and two miles south of the subject property. However, they are of limited size, and the historical record indicates that the wildland fire hazard in Rancho Mirage is relatively low because most of the rugged terrain is so steep, rocky, and dry that few plants (fire fuel sources) thrive in the area.

The Project has a very limited potential to exacerbate wildfire risks by placing new occupiable buildings in proximity to the mountain slopes. However, all proposed buildings and improvements will be on the low-lying valley floor. Most existing vegetation will be cleared during construction and replaced by structures and paved surfaces. New landscape vegetation will be carefully maintained and watered regularly, limiting the possibility for vegetation fires to ignite and spread. No structures will be built within the hillsides, and public access to the hillsides (south of the bighorn sheep fence) will be prohibited. Potentially hazardous and/or combustible materials onsite will be handled, used, and stored in compliance with applicable regulations and guidelines to reduce potential fire hazards (see Section 9, Hazards and Hazardous Materials). The Project will not result in installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risks, such as roads, emergency water sources, or utilities. Utility extensions will be limited to parcel-level improvements.



The Project is not expected to increase exposure of people or structures to significant fire or fire-related risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, resulting from runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. The City maintains a Multi-Hazard Functional Plan that addresses the planned response to extraordinary emergency situations, including natural and human-caused disasters. The Project would not impair the adopted emergency response plan. Impacts will be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required

**Monitoring:** None required



21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- a) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** As discussed in Sections 4 (Biological Resources) and 5 (Cultural Resources), the Project has the potential to impact sensitive species and/or previously unknown cultural resources. However, impacts will be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of the mitigation measures described therein.
- b) **Less Than Significant.** Project impacts will not be cumulatively considerable because the Project is consistent with the anticipated land uses of the subject property analyzed in the General Plan and Highway 111 East Specific Plan. Employment and/or population growth resulting from the Project will not surpass that anticipated in the General Plan EIR. The Project's incremental effects are not considerable when viewed in connection with other projects. Impacts will be less than significant.
- c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** The proposed Project could cause environmental effects that could cause adverse effects on humans, specifically as it relates to aesthetics and Geology & Soils. However, the mitigation measures provided in this Initial Study and supporting documentation cited herein will reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels.



## REFERENCES

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- CalEEMod Emissions Model, Version 2016.3.2
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- Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> SIP, 2003
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